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THE SLAVE

THE SERF, AND
THE FREEMAN



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THE SLAVE, THE SERF,

AND

THE FREEMAN.

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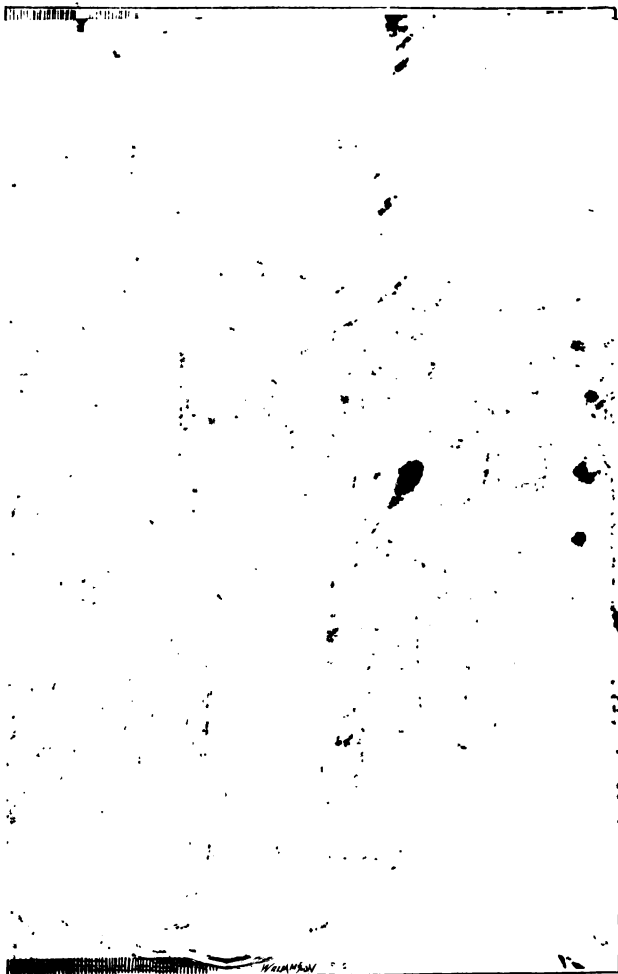
THE SLAVE.

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THE SLAVE.

Page 37.

THE SLAVE, THE SERF,

AND

THE FREEMAN.

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY

MRS. CAMPBELL OVEREND.

'In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted ; or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side ;
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves ; that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others suffering more.'

COWPER.

EDINBURGH :
WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND CO.

1872.

250. 9. 233.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	9

THE SLAVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENTRY OF THE BRITISH SLAVES INTO ROME,	15
--	----

CHAPTER II.

THE SALE OF THE BRITISH SLAVES,	25
---	----

CHAPTER III.

THE MANSION OF CORVINUS,	38
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE FREEDMAN,	50
-------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING,	61
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.		PAGE
NORVA,		75

CHAPTER VII.		
THE REVOLT OF THE SLAVES,		93

CHAPTER VIII.		
LINUS IN PRISON,		106

CHAPTER IX.		
THE MARTYRS,		113



THE SERF.

CHAPTER I.		
THE SERF'S HUT,		127

CHAPTER II.		
THE SERF IN PRISON,		145

CHAPTER III.		
THE MONK'S INTERCESSION,		167

CHAPTER IV.		
JEHAN GOES TO TOURS,		181

CHAPTER V.		
JEHAN'S VISIT TO THE FRANCISCANS,		195

CONTENTS.

7

CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
JEHAN IN PARIS,	215

CHAPTER VII.

JEHAN'S VISIT TO HIS OLD MASTER,	228
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TERRIBLE FATE OF THE SERFS,	244
---	-----



THE FREEMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE WIDOW AND HER SONS,	259
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER II.

THE ORPHANS—FRANCIS AND FREDERICK,	268
--	-----

CHAPTER III.

THE KIND BROTHER,	275
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IV.

A PLOT DISCOVERED,	283
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER V.

THE BURGLARS,	295
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VI.

FREDERICK'S REWARD,	299
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VII.

A TEMPTATION,	PAGE 304
-------------------------	-------------

CHAPTER VIII.

FREDERICK'S GRATITUDE,	312
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION,	330
-----------------------	-----



NOTES,	333
------------------	-----





INTRODUCTION.

IN the book which has been used as the groundwork of the following stories, these words are to be found: 'When we cast a glance back on the past, we feel more indulgent to the present, and we look forward with more hope to the future.'

Christianity has not yet done its work in the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to 'preach the gospel to the poor;' He was sent 'to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.' Much has been done, yet much remains as yet undone.

The doctrine we wish to inculcate is this: freedom and brotherly love among all, rich and

poor alike, can only be brought about by true Christianity.

The gospel is truly the 'good tidings;' and it is only by the gospel that the world can be made better,—by this alone that the world has hitherto been reformed.

If we wish (and who does not?) to see society as it should be—when all shall be alike free—when class shall no longer war against class, but all, according to Christ's command, shall 'love as brethren,' every man seeking not his own but his neighbour's good, and striving to 'please his neighbour for his good to edification'—when wars shall cease, and the kingdom of the Lord shall come, for which we all daily pray,—then we must not separate the hope of this happy time from the only true means of attaining it.

The gospel is the true charter of freedom,—the freedom given by God to man. It is the only sure pledge of reform. It is '*the truth*' that shall make us free.

Let the young, then, learn faith in Him who was sent on earth to atone for the sins of men, and

make them sons of God. 'If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'

'He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and, though poor perhaps compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers,—his to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpretentious eye,
And smiling say, "My Father made them all."'

COWPER.



THE SLAVE.



CHAPTER I.

THE ENTRY OF THE BRITISH SLAVES INTO ROME.

Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Britain's coast we left forlorn ;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from proud Rome bought and sold us,
Paid our price in paltry gold ;
But slaves though they have enroll'd us,
Minds are never to be sold.
Still in thought as free as ever,
What are Romans' rights, I ask,—
Us from our delights to sever,
Us to torture, us to task ?

ALL the streets that led from Mount Janiculum to the Forum in Rome were crowded by the masses of idle people that are generally gathered together in the great centres of civilisation.

On that day Roman indolence had been aroused by the hope of a public spectacle ; they expected

the entrance of an immense number of prisoners. These came from Britain, a remote corner of the then known world, surrounded on all sides by the sea,—a land possessing magnificent forests, inhabited by a brave people, and protected by unknown gods, which had been at last partly subdued by the Roman armies; although the warlike people of the northern part of the island still defied their attacks, and were never wholly subdued, even by those who esteemed themselves the masters of the world.

The whole force of the empire, although exerted to the utmost under Severus, one of its most warlike princes, could not totally subdue the nation of the Caledonians, whose invincible ferocity in defence of freedom at last obliged that emperor, after granting them peace, to spend nearly two years in building, with incredible labour, a wall of solid stone twelve feet high and eight feet thick, with forts and towers at proper distances, and a rampart and ditch, from the Solway Firth nearly to the mouth of the Tyne, to repress their inroads.

The people of Rome were now to behold a numerous band of these natives of Britain, whose manners and customs and worship were so strange, who had resisted Cæsar, and who had now after a severe struggle partially submitted to the rule of the Romans.

Therefore on this great day the Roman people were much excited, and their curiosity was aroused. There was, at the same time, a triumph for their pride and a spectacle for their amusement. Yet, even amid this crowd that were gathered together by one feeling of triumph, a few words of regret were heard: they were uttered by those who were sorry that they had not a few hundreds or thousands of sesterces with which to buy a Briton!

About the fourth hour (ten o'clock in the morning), the spectators arranged themselves in two lines: the column of prisoners began to pass through the Aurelian Gate, and to march through the streets of the city.

More than six thousand Celts, bearing the double evidence of their state of slavery,—on their

brows the leafy crown (which was the symbol of their subjection), and in their countenances the indescribable expression of unutterable sorrow,—slowly defiled past the members of the sovereign nation which had conquered them.

Their looks and their attitudes showed the extremity of their sufferings; their minds were agonized by despair, their bodies were worn out by constant sorrow and fatigue; their long and weary march, and the warm climate, which was new to them, had exhausted their energies. Accustomed from childhood to the fresh breezes of the ocean, to the cloudy skies of Britain, to the silence of their vast forests, they could not endure the burning sun of Italy, nor the suffocating dust of the highways, nor the deafening cries of the noisy crowd. But if, weakened by fatigue and by a struggle against circumstances so new to them, they ventured for a moment to slacken their pace or to linger on their way, they were soon reminded by the whip of the slave-driver, that now they had no right even to a few moments of rest.

It is uncertain whether the sight of such deep misery did not move feelings of compassion in some of the numerous Roman citizens who had assembled to rejoice in their new conquest ; but certain it is that there were no outward demonstrations of pity, no eye was cast down with shame for the inhuman triumph over the vanquished, no murmur of sympathy was heard for the misfortunes of the victims !

When a brave people are crushed under the weight of a calamity which destroys their prosperity and comfort at one blow, the individual sorrows of each are lost, so to speak, in the general misery, and all appear to suffer alike.

Yet among the thousands of victims that passed through Rome on that eventful day, there was one whose face wore an expression of greater anxiety and suffering, yet also seemed more animated and courageous than the others. It was the face of a woman of about thirty-five years of age, who led by the hand her little son, on whom her eyes rested with anxiety and anguish, yet with a look of firmness and energy.

Her name was Norva. She was the widow of a noble British chief. She had been accustomed to command, not to obey. She had seen her husband and her elder son fall by her side, bravely fighting in defence of their country; then she and her younger boy had been made prisoners.

She was almost indifferent to her own sufferings,—all her thoughts were centred on Arviragus, her darling son. He was about twelve years old, and was a manly little fellow for his age. His bold step, his air of dignity, his quiet resignation, marked him as noble by birth, the son of a war-like chief.

With his hands in his belt, his head upright, his eyes sad, but tearless, he followed without a murmur those who went before him.

He was so young, that in his case tears might have been excused; but he took courage from his mother's example, and when their eyes met he carried his head still higher, and stepped more firmly.

Yet the poor boy suffered cruelly, for he thought of the past, and his companions had

told him what the future would be. But he felt that in his mother's case the suffering would be greater still, that her grief for the past would be more agonizing, and her torture, old as she was, more terrible ; so he carefully concealed his own feelings.

The sight of Rome and its magnificent monuments made no impression on Norva. The noble palaces, the rich temples of the greatest city in the world, passed like shadows before her eyes,—she scarcely saw them. Arviragus, whose youth prevented him from feeling the full weight of the calamity that had overtaken them,—who had understood that they were to submit to the fate that they could not avert,—was astounded by the marvels and the wonderful works of art which were gradually displayed to the admiring eyes of the captives.

The multitude of statues, the noble columns of the temples, the palaces, and their magnificent courts, delighted the eyes of the boy. He was also pleased to see, amid these grand works of art, hundreds of men, richly clad, who were going

along in gilded chariots. When he reached the Forum he was quite bewildered. The finest edifices in Rome were in this enclosure, near the base of the Capitoline Hill. 'In the immediate vicinity of the Forum,' says a modern author, 'the courts of justice and the government offices were usually established; here the principal merchants and bankers transacted their business, and here public meetings of every description were held: it was, as it were, the focus of commercial, legal, and political life.'

The eyes of Arviragus glanced from the Basilicæ to the magnificent statues, and everywhere he saw the same wonderful grandeur. The young Briton marvelled whether all that he saw was really the work of man! When they reached the centre of the open space, the procession stopped for a little.

Arviragus was cruelly reminded of his own situation and of his mother's when he saw that they had nearly reached the end of their journey. The wonder at the novelties which surrounded him had quickly passed away, and he felt anxious and fearful about the future. What was to become of

his mother and himself? Were they to have the same master? Or must the sorrow of separation from each other be added to their present miseries?

Exhausted by the heat, the Britons, so strong in their own healthy climate, threw themselves, wearied out, on the pavement of the Forum, eagerly seeking for any shade, were it even that of the smallest columns.

Norva and her son fared well, for, as it chanced, they were placed under a little shade.

The rough voices of the slave-dealers soon interrupted the short interval of rest allowed to the captives. Signs were made ordering them to rise; and each slave-dealer drove off his allotted gang of slaves, to form again in the order of the procession. They passed up the *Via Sacra* to the usual place where the different gangs were separated. Arviragus and his mother having been bought from the State by the same slave-merchant, were taken with about thirty others to a *taberna*, or shop where the private purchase of slaves often took place.

The final sale of the captives was to take place

some days afterwards, when they had had time to rest and refresh themselves ; for the Romans wished that their slaves should be healthy, strong, good-looking, and vigorous. This appearance of health and strength, which was paid for as a sign of the master's wealth, soon passed away during the hardships of slavery ; but while it lasted, it was considered as an ornament of the establishment, of which the richest might be proud.

Now that the national pride had been satisfied by the exhibition of a long train of prisoners, and by this proof of the conquest of a brave people, there were other things to be thought of. The merchandise must be prepared for the purchasers, the human cattle must be fattened for the market, —such was the noble profession of the *mangones*, or slave-dealers.

Whenever the band of Britons among whom were Norva and her son had entered the taberna (or tavern) before mentioned, the greatest attention was paid to them : an abundant repast was provided for them, and some old slaves were ordered to attend to all their wants.



CHAPTER II.

THE SALE OF THE BRITISH SLAVES.

‘What wish can prosper, or what prayer,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge, and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end ;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.’

COWPER.

WHEN the day of the sale arrived, the slave-merchants ordered their captives to take a bath, and afterwards to perfume themselves with sweet ointment. The long hair of the prisoners was carefully combed, and ornamented according to the Roman fashion, care being taken at the same time to preserve the foreign aspect which marked them as strangers.

‘Prisoners of war,’ says a modern author, ‘were,

by the ancient law of nations, the absolute property of the captors, and as such were either retained for the service of the State and employed in public works, or were sold by auction.' 'The practice in early times was to expose captives for sale with chaplets round their heads ; and hence the phrase, "*Sub corona vendere servus venire*," that is, "to sell or to be sold for a slave."'

The *mangones* or *venalarii* (or slave-merchants) collected slaves from all quarters, and disposed of some in the open market, and of others by private bargain. They were required to mark the nationalities and qualities of their slaves by various marks. A label (*titulus*) was attached to the neck of each, stating the age, country, good qualities, and defects of the individual.

Slaves newly imported from abroad had their feet whitened with gypsum or with white chalk. Some of them wore a white cap, to show that the slave-merchant would not be responsible for them, and would leave the purchasers to judge for themselves. Mingled among the British captives were some old slaves, that the dealers hoped to sell

among the crowds of persons who would flock to see the foreign prisoners.

Again the splendour of the Forum was displayed before the enslaved Britons. The poor captives had recovered some of their former strength during the rest permitted them, but their minds and hearts were sad and sorrowful.

The grandeur of all that surrounded them, the marble statues, the temples, the magnificent monuments, were scarcely noticed by them. One thing they could not help remarking, and that was the deserted appearance of the place which they had so lately seen crowded with people. It was the time when the magistrates administered justice, and the merchants transacted business in the Basilicae, or covered porticoes used for these purposes. Several of these ancient courts of justice are now converted into churches. The idlers were as usual assembled wherever there was anything going on, seriously occupied in looking at the work of others, and criticising, without taking any share in it.

An hour or two later the appearance of the

Forum would be completely changed; the Roman population would flock to the place. Meantime, the unfortunate captives were left unmolested.

They employed this interval in saying to each other a last farewell. Friends and relations might still press each other's hands, they might weep together, they might speak of those they had lost, they might utter the names and memories of their country and their homes in the much-loved Celtic tongue which they would soon be compelled to cease to use, and to learn the language of their masters!

The strong-minded among them tried to keep up the courage of the weaker, by speaking to them of vengeance. They said the fortune of war might still turn; they repeated that all hope for Britain was not lost, because the gods that protected it would always watch over their exiled children. Among the voices which were raised to excite their hopes and revive their pride, that of the old Druid Morgan was heard above all the rest.

‘Let us not meanly show the wounds of our

hearts to our enemies,' said he in a calm and firm tone, 'after the best blood in our country has been shed by them; let us not give them the triumph of seeing our tears flow. Whatever may be the miseries reserved for us by these Romans, no other agony can be so great as that which we felt when they tore us away from our homes and our native land. Let us take courage from the thought that we have already endured the worst of our sufferings. May even the mothers among us, who endure twofold anguish by seeing the sufferings of their children, yet permit no cry to escape them! May the hearts of British women be noble enough to repress even a mother's tears!'

The eyes of Morgan glanced on those around him with the expression of one accustomed to command; but when he looked at Norva and saw her eyes anxiously and sorrowfully fixed on her son, his face expressed the compassion he felt, and he said in a gentler voice:

'Norva, you are the wife of a chief: think that our brother beholds you still from the palace amid the clouds where he dwells; do not make him

blush for you among the heroes that are now with him.'

'I will try to follow your advice,' replied the poor mother.

'And you, my boy!' added the old man, turning to Arviragus: 'in a few hours you will perhaps be left alone like a branch untimely torn from the parent tree; but remember that Britain is your country, and that, long before Rome trampled it under foot, the Celts, who are now defeated but not subdued, lived free and happy among their magnificent forests. Promise me, then, that you will always hate our conquerors! And when our gods shall permit that the time of deliverance for our country shall come, let us show this nation that we also are worthy of being masters; for we know how to make them suffer! If ever at the sight of our enemies you should feel a passing emotion of pity, repress it; listen only to the remembrance of your wrongs, and you will feel that the Britons, if they can leave nothing else to their children, have at least left them the duty of avenging their sufferings.'

The fire that flashed from the eyes of Arviragus promised more than the most energetic words could have done. Morgan, the noble and courageous old man, but the priest of a false religion that knew not forgiveness, appeared glad to see the feelings that he had excited. He placed his hand upon the head of the boy and blessed him, then he turned to the mother and said :

‘Norva, do not fear for your son ; young as he is, his heart is brave enough to permit the sorrows of life to pass over him without degrading him.’

The clepsydra* near the temple of Castor and Pollux marked the fifth hour. It was the time when the crowd was about to flock into the Forum : the slave-merchant commanded his slaves to be silent.

Norva kept close to Morgan and tried to draw her boy nearer to her, for she felt herself strengthened by the twofold protection of love and of pity. Arviragus pressed his mother’s hand

* See Note I.

to his heart, and looked at her with an expression which combined the love and submission of a child with the firm and proud resolution of a man.

The curious and idle crowd soon surrounded the *tabernæ* (or slave-shops) which were open at different places in the Forum. Each of the *mangones* (or slave-merchants), with a rod in his hand, walking up and down before his prisoners, tried to attract the attention of the crowd by vaunting his own merchandise.

‘Come to me, illustrious citizens,’ exclaimed the proprietor of Norva and her son; ‘no other can offer you slaves endowed with qualities so wonderful as mine possess. You know that I have been long known in the trade for the superiority of my merchandise. Look!’ continued he, pointing to a Briton about thirty years of age, who was remarkable for the elegance of his form and his apparent strength; ‘where will you find another man so strong and so handsome? Is he not worthy to sit for a model of Hercules? Well, noble Romans, believe me, on my word—I have no motive to tell

you an untruth—this slave is a thousand times more valuable on account of his honesty, his intelligence, his sobriety, and his submission, than even for his handsome form, which you all must admire. Who among you would not willingly make a sacrifice to purchase such a treasure ?’

As the crowd increased round the *taberna* of the *mango*, his talkative effrontery increased. One might have said that the mean face of this *merchant of men*, the living personification of every disgraceful and brutal passion, was placed as if in contrast beside the noble Celtic heads and faces, which expressed, for the most part, proud, grave and dignified feelings.

Several purchases had been made, several bitter sentences of separation had been pronounced between those who loved each other. More than one old man had seen the son torn away from him on whom he leant, more than one child had seen his mother taken away from him ; yet all had firmly kept the promise that they had made, not to suffer their grief to be a spectacle to their foes. When friends and companions were lost to

their sight in the crowd, the brave Celts stifled their sighs and repressed their tears; and if in some cases a mother lost her courage when her child was torn from her, her friends placed themselves before her, that their oppressors might not see her grief.

Norva silently watched the terrible scene. At each blow which fell upon one of her companions, she felt a fresh agony pierce her heart; but when she was ready to give way to her feelings, she looked at Morgan, and the sight of his calm, dignified face seemed to revive her courage.

At one moment she felt a gleam of joy,—she saw a mother and her child bought by the same master. How earnestly she wished that this might be her case! Yet she could scarcely hope it would be so, for there were round her so many children separated from their mothers—so many mothers who had lost their children.

There were not more than ten Britons left in the group in which Morgan, Norva, and Arviragus stood, when the eyes of a freedman were fixed with marked attention upon the boy.

The slave-merchant, always watchful and eager to sell those that remained, went quickly up to Arviragus, and, placing the end of his rod upon the boy's shoulder, he said to the freedman :

‘Look here, noble Roman ! would you not suppose this boy, tall and stout as he is, to be at least fifteen years of age ? Well, I assure you that he is only nine : you may imagine what a strong man he will become. These Britons are truly a wonderful race.’

Norva could not refrain from shuddering when she saw the rod of the slave-merchant placed upon her son. But Arviragus gave no outward sign of emotion during the long examination to which he was subjected by the intending purchaser.

After having convinced himself that the boy would suit him, the freedman offered to buy him for three hundred sesterces. Some of the bystanders raised the price to four hundred sesterces, then the bidding stopped.

The freedman was the last bidder. He went up to a man who was seated before a small table on which were iron scales, and taking a

weight in his hand he threw money into the scales, saying :

‘According to the law of the Quirites,* this young boy is mine, and I have bought him with this money in these scales.’ Then he let the weight fall into one of the scales.

The sound was like a death-blow to Norva, for it had preceded the departure of each of her companions. The boy was troubled when he saw his mother’s paleness, but a glance from Morgan restored his calmness. The old man whispered a few words in Norva’s ear, and the poor mother tried to restrain her feelings. The slave-merchant took Arviragus to a group of slaves belonging to his new master. He tore the boy cruelly away from his mother, and would not even allow Norva time to give her son a parting kiss.

‘Farewell, my dear mother,’ cried Arviragus ; ‘we shall see each other again soon, I hope. I will seek you out ; depend upon my patience and perseverance. Farewell, Morgan !’

* See Note 2.



‘Farewell!’ said Morgan, holding out his hand towards him.

The arm of Morgan was extended long after the boy was gone, for he held it in such a position as to hide from the gazing crowd the pale face of Norva.





CHAPTER III.

THE MANSION OF CORVINUS.

'On her seven hills of yore
Rome sat a queen,
They that her mantle wore
As gods were seen.

'She had her triumphs then,
Purpling the street ;
Leaders and sceptred men
Bow'd at her feet.'

MRS. HEMANS.

THE freedman who had bought Arviragus was the steward of one of the richest patricians in Rome. Claudius Corvinus had inherited, only a few years before, two hundred millions of sesterces, and the greater part of this large sum was already spent. His house was noted as one of the most magnificent on Mount Cœlius. The floors were of marble of various colours, the pillars of bronze ; ivory statues

adorned the rooms, and the baths were of porphyry.* There were as many *triclinia*,† or banqueting-halls, as there are seasons in the year; and the walls and couches were richly adorned, and inlaid with silver, the cushions of swansdown covered with rich silk. Beautiful paintings adorned the walls, and curtains of crimson embroidered with gold were hung round the banqueting-tables.

When the freedman brought the boy to this splendid palace, he knocked at a gate of bronze; the *ostiarius* (or porter), who was chained to a post, came out of his lodge and opened the gate. Beside him was a dog, also chained. The freedman then told a slave to call the Carthaginian.

This was the interpreter, whose business it was to make himself understood by the three hundred slaves of Corvinus. Before his captivity he had been a seafaring man, and had engaged in trade in Carthage, his native place. He had visited many nations in the Carthaginian ships, and spoke almost all the languages of the nations and tribes living on the sea-coasts.

* See Note 3.

† See Note 4.

The freedman gave Arviragus into the charge of this man, that he might give him the necessary directions as to his work, and cause him to be clothed in a suitable dress.

The Carthaginian led the boy to the part of the building occupied by the slaves.

‘Has any one told you what are to be your duties?’ asked the interpreter.

‘I have till now received lessons only from free-men,’ replied Arviragus proudly. The interpreter smiled.

‘You are a true son of these Britons, who fear nothing but that the sky should fall,’ replied he ironically. ‘Yet *here* I advise you to be afraid of the lash. You will soon know that, as a slave, you are not a *person*, but a *thing*; your master may do what he likes with you: he may put you in chains without any reason, may cause you to be flogged to amuse himself, or may throw you into his fish-pond to be eaten by his *murænæ*,* as Vedius Pollio did to some of his slaves.’

‘Let him exercise his rights,’ said Arviragus.

* See Note 5.



‘Corvinus is not ill-natured,’ continued the Carthaginian. ‘He is one of the most luxurious and fashionable men in Rome, and his principal occupation is to ruin himself. He rises habitually about the tenth hour, and he then puts himself in the hands of his domestic slaves, who perfume him, paint his cheeks, and rub his chin with *psilothrum*,* to take off his beard. There are a hundred and fifty slaves employed about his person alone, and each of them has a different function.’

‘What is to be my work?’ asked Arviragus.

‘You will be employed in driving the cars and chariots,’ replied the interpreter. ‘Follow me; I will show you where you are to work.’

He led the young Briton to the coach-houses, and showed him the various conveyances that were in them.

‘You see here,’ said he, ‘the *pctorrita*,—waggon with four wheels, like those used by the Germans,—which we use for the conveyance of provisions or slaves. In this second division you see the covered cars, in which our master goes out when

* See Note 6.

it rains. These light chariots, adorned with ivory, gold, silver, and precious stones, that you see to the right, are those in which Corvinus usually drives out. On our left are litters with rich carpets and crimson curtains.'

Arviragus was amazed at the sight of such magnificence, of which he had never even dreamed. The interpreter then took him to the splendid stables.

'The fifty horses that you see there,' said he, 'are used for drawing the chariots of Corvinus. Their bits are all of solid gold. The sixty horses that you see on the other side are ridden by the Numidian slaves, who precede our master's equipage when he goes out. Now that you have seen all this, I shall take you to the slave who superintends the carriages, and he will give you his orders as to what you will have to do.'

Arviragus went with the interpreter to the superintendent of the carriages, who explained to the Carthaginian what the boy would be required to do. The necessary explanations were made to Arviragus by the interpreter, who then added:

‘I have one more piece of advice to give you, and that is, never speak to our master, even after you have learned to understand the Latin language. He is a haughty man, and never speaks to his slaves. Even when he gives them an order, he does so by signs or in writing. Now you may go and get your *diarium* (or daily ration), and then go to your work.’

Each slave received an allowance of corn or bread, sometimes wine, and something to give a relish to the farinaceous food,—usually olives or salt fish. If given daily, it was called *diarium*.

All that Arviragus saw and heard was so new to him, that his mind was for the time somewhat diverted from his sorrows. He was still more surprised when he saw his master Claudius Corvinus appear, surrounded by his *clients*,* his musicians, freedmen, and other dependents. Corvinus was dressed in a white toga with a violet border, his hair was perfumed with cinnamon, and his fingers were covered with rings set with precious stones.

* See Note 7.

Arviragus had never seen or even imagined such splendour. Such was at this period the luxurious lives of the rich patricians in Rome, that their dwellings were not like private houses, but rather resembled the effeminate courts of powerful Asiatic kings. The voices of singing-men and singing-women were heard within their precincts ; the crowns of leaves and flowers thrown off by the guests lay withering on the threshold ; and the banqueting-halls were constantly filled with the sweetest perfumes.

Before a banquet, '*coronæ* (chaplets or wreaths) were distributed among the guests. They were originally assumed not merely for ornament, but from a belief that the odour of certain plants neutralized the intoxicating properties of wine ; and hence we find that they were formed not of fragrant flowers alone, such as roses or violets, but of parsley, ivy, and various other plants, simple or combined.'

'Not less essential than *coronæ* to the full enjoyment of a banquet was a supply of perfumes ; and towards the close of the Republic this taste

amounted to a passion.' These were obtained from sweet smelling herbs and flowers.

Every morning a crowd of clients filled the vestibule of the house of Corvinus to receive the *sportula*, or daily distribution either of money or food, which was given them by their patron. He showed himself sometimes to these domestic courtiers, passing among them with a careless step, and occasionally inclining his head to the *nomenclator* (the slave who was appointed to tell him the names of each of his dependents). On all occasions of ceremony the clients followed in the train of Corvinus as his escort.

A walk under the porticoes of the Forum, or a drive in his chariot, filled up the time of Corvinus till the hour for his repast.

The banquets of Claudius Corvinus were noted for their magnificence. He was one of the party of epicures who had offered public prizes to those who should invent new dishes. His cook was a worthy pupil of him to whom the epicure Apicius* had presented a crown of silver, because he

* See Note 8.

esteemed him the most useful man in the Republic. Corvinus had bought his head-cook for the enormous price of two hundred thousand sesterces.

The whole world was placed under contribution to furnish delicacies for the table of the Roman. There were truffles and guinea-fowls from Africa, rabbits from Spain, pheasants from Greece, and peacocks from the remotest parts of Asia.

The guests reclined at table on couches made of the most costly wood,—cedar, citron, and cypress, covered with the softest cushions and shawls of immense value. Mulsum was handed round,—a delicious mixture of wine and honey. There were also the choicest wines in elegant vases. The first course usually consisted of eggs, fish, and light vegetables. The delicacies that followed are too various to be even enumerated. The sturgeon was their favourite fish, the hare was much prized, and the thrush was esteemed the finest bird. There was a great variety of fish which were brought to Rome from a distance, sometimes preserved in pots of honey. Venison and pork were

also favourite dishes. They had pigeons, geese, ducks, quails, and becaficoes. A species of dormouse, and also snails, were served up; and there were fancy dishes, which had no other merit than having cost an enormous price,—such as the brains of ostriches and the tongues of birds, and many more that might be named. The meat was followed by a dessert of sweetmeats, cakes, and delicious fruits. Yet amid all this magnificence and luxury the guests had no such convenience as forks, but tore their food to pieces with their fingers, with the help of spoons.

It may easily be imagined that, when a variety of such delicacies were daily offered to the guests of Corvinus, his *triclinium* was frequented not only by his flatterers, but by members of the noblest families, and the highest magistrates of Rome.

The surprise which Arviragus felt when he first obtained a glimpse of his master's luxury and extravagance, was soon succeeded by feelings of contempt. Brought up in the hardy and frugal habits of his nation, and accustomed to despise

everything which neither contributed to man's strength nor to his wisdom, the boy looked with proud disdain on the wasteful and useless profusion in his master's house, and thought more fondly and sorrowfully of his beloved home in Britain.

The remembrance of his mother was always present with him. His love for her seemed to increase every day; and the hope of finding out where she was, and meeting her again, was the only thing that sustained him in his hard and suffering life.

But in order to attempt this difficult search, he must first learn to make himself understood in the language of his captors. It was a difficult and hateful task, for his instincts and feelings all revolted at the sound of the language of his hated conquerors. But his love for his mother, his strong will, and determined perseverance, overcame all difficulties. In a few months Arviragus could understand what was said to him in Latin, and could answer fluently in that language.

He then began his search for his mother ; but he soon found that he was not permitted leisure and liberty to carry on this search to any purpose. His time belonged to his master, and it was with difficulty he could secure a few hours of leisure. Many months passed away, and he could not discover what had become of Norva.

Sad and discouraged, the boy was thinking in vain what other means he could employ, when a scene which he one day witnessed changed the whole course of his ideas.






CHAPTER IV.

THE FREEDMAN.

'I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
No ; dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.'

COWPER.

NE evening when Arviragus was seated on the threshold of the coach-house, deep in thought, with his face hidden in his hands and his elbows on his knees, he heard loud cries of joy. A German, whose industry and sobriety Arviragus had often remarked, came out of the part of the building occupied by the slaves, with his head shaved, and surrounded by his companions, who were congratulating him.

All of them were going in the direction of the rooms occupied by their master.

‘What is the matter?’ asked Arviragus, much surprised.

‘The German is going to be made a freedman,’ replied the interpreter.

‘What do you say?’ exclaimed the young Briton.

‘Can a slave recover his freedom?’

‘Yes, when he pays for it.’

‘And how can a slave possibly get enough money for that purpose?’

‘By imitating this barbarian, who for some years has taken only one meal instead of two, has regularly sold the half of his *diarium*, has worked half the night, and has made the best possible use of the smallest profits. By adding penny to penny, he has succeeded at last in amassing a *peculium* of six thousand sesterces, with which he has paid for his enfranchisement.’

‘What do you mean by his *peculium*?’ asked Arviragus.

‘The *peculium* of a slave is money which he earns honestly for himself,’ said the interpreter.

‘I thought that all he earned was his master’s,’ replied Arviragus.

‘Of course it is, if his master chooses to claim it; but there are some good-natured masters, like Corvinus, who allow their slaves to make a little money for themselves if they can, and then they sometimes make enough to buy their freedom. And if their price is very high, more than they can hoard up, they occasionally lighten their work by buying a common slave to work for them. Have you never seen the slave who is the *vicarius* of Lydus?’

‘I have seen him working for Lydus, but I did not know why,’ said Arviragus. ‘Oh, how terrible it is to be the slave of a slave!’

While the interpreter was giving these explanations to Arviragus, the German had proceeded to the *triclinium*, where Corvinus was reclining on his couch at the table, and the *prætor* (or civil judge in the supreme courts) was beside him.

The German advanced towards his master, the other slaves remained at the door of the room.

Arviragus stood among them, to see what was going to take place.

A person came forward, laid a rod on the head of the slave, and claimed him as a freeman in the set form: '*Hunc ego hominem liberum esse aio*' (I testify that this man is free).

Corvinus placed his hand on the slave, and turning him round, said, '*Hunc ego hominem liberum esse volo*' (I wish this man to be free); then, giving the German a slight blow on the cheek, he let him go. The magistrate then pronounced him free, by giving judgment in favour of the claimant, and the ceremony was complete.

'Now go,' said Corvinus with a smile; 'but remember that, if I am ruined, I shall look to you for the usual assistance due from a freedman to his patron.'

The German then withdrew, and the slaves formerly his companions were invited to take leave of him, by being entertained by him at the nearest tavern.

The spectacle that Arviragus had just seen gave a new direction to his thoughts, and gave

rise to new hopes. Until now he had thought only of finding his mother, and of consoling her as well as he could amid the sufferings of slavery; but now he was delighted with the thought that it was possible that both might yet recover their freedom.

With the quick and firm decision which characterized his race, the young Briton determined to take measures for the deliverance of his mother and himself; while at the same time he resolved to continue his search for her, to the utmost of his ability. He knew well that the end he sought to attain was far distant, and would cost him many a long and weary effort; but from his earliest years he had been trained to be patient, diligent, and persevering, and he knew how long it was necessary to wait before an acorn would become an oak.

He began by taking no more food than was absolutely necessary for him, and by selling the remainder. In return for a few sesterces he did part of the work of several of the other slaves employed like him about the carriages; and he sat up at night to make some of the weapons

and other articles peculiar to his country, which he sold to those who collected curiosities.

He could not continue much longer his inquiries about his mother, for the summer had come, and Corvinus was preparing to go to his villa at Baia. He travelled slowly in a *lectica*, or wooden palanquin with curtains, within which he lay comfortably on soft cushions. He would not stop to rest at inns, as these were used only by the common classes; but all along his route he lodged either at the houses of his friends, or at private resting-places which he had caused to be built for his own use. His villa at Baia was worthy in every way of his residence on Mount Caelius.

Arviragus had left Rome with regret, but he soon found that he had reason to be glad of it. In the country his master lived more simply, exacted less service from his slaves, and allowed them more leisure. Besides the means of earning a little money which he had already, the boy was now enabled to work occasionally for a neighbouring gardener.

His *peculium* increased slowly, but it did increase. Every evening he looked at the sesterces and other coins which he had amassed with so much care. He counted them, he made them ring against each other; and the sound rejoiced him as it does a miser. As each piece of money fell into the vase of clay which contained his treasure, he fancied he heard the breaking of one of the links of the chain which kept his mother and himself in captivity.

The industrious habits of Arviragus left him no time to join his companions, either in their idle talk or in their dissipation: thus, although living among them, he continued a stranger to them and their ways.

One person only had made acquaintance with him, and seemed to take an interest in his efforts. It was an Armenian slave, with a gentle and grave countenance, whom the other slaves mocked because of his meekness and resignation. The slaves employed for domestic purposes were divided into *ordinarii* and *vulgares*, or upper and under-slaves. The under-slaves

were the household servants, and the *ordinarii*, or upper-slaves, were those who held offices of trust and responsibility. To those belonged the highly-educated slaves, of whom Linus the Armenian was one. His office was to copy the manuscripts with which Corvinus enriched his library. His learning was profound and varied, although, from his timid and modest manner, he might have been supposed the most simple of men. He could repeat fluently the finest passages from the works of the philosophers, orators, and poets of Greece; but he preferred to all these the writings of some comparatively unknown Jews—manuscripts which he had copied for his own use, and which he read whenever he had a moment's leisure.

The quiet patience of Arviragus and his persevering industry had attracted the attention of Linus; and he tried to gain the confidence of the young Briton. Arviragus at first repulsed the advances made by the old man; but Linus persevered, and Arviragus was at length won by the gentle kindness with which Linus treated him.

He told Linus of his hopes of freedom. Linus smiled sadly.

‘Do you think, then, that I can never succeed in buying my own and my mother’s freedom?’ said the boy anxiously.

‘I think you may succeed in time; but of what use will this freedom be to you? Do not hope to return to Britain. Corvinus would never permit it. You would be obliged to live under his patronage, and to be here to assist in maintaining him if he should fall into poverty. The law makes him your heir, to the extent at least of the half of whatever you may possess; therefore you may well believe that he will keep you within his power. If he has any reason to complain of your conduct, he may banish you to the coasts of Campania, about twenty miles from Rome. You would never be allowed to aspire to any honourable office, and you would still be despised by these proud Romans, because you had once been a slave. Such is the liberty of freedmen: they are still slaves with their chains lengthened.’

‘Notwithstanding,’ said Arviragus, ‘I should be

at least near my mother ; and what a comfort it would be if we might be together and converse freely about our distant home ! I would sharpen my arms, and hope for better times.'

'That means, that you will live cherishing the hope of vengeance.'

'And the gods of Britain will not betray my trust in them,' said Arviragus in a confident tone. 'Our Druids have said that a day will come when each orphan among us may shed the blood of our enemies on the tomb of his father. I know the place where my father rests, Linus ; and I will dye his grave a deeper red than the rich purple of which our conquerors are so proud.'

The right hand of the young Briton was extended as if it held a sword. Linus was going to reply, but he suddenly stopped.

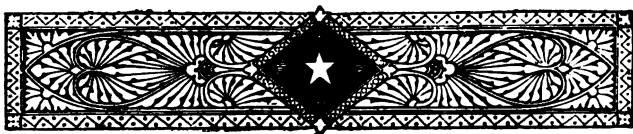
'It is not yet time,' murmured he in a low tone ; 'he is too much excited.' Then he added, 'As long as you trust in your own strength, my boy, you cannot understand the truth.'

Wrapping himself in his woollen cloak, Linus

went away with his head cast down, and his hands clasped.

Imbued as Arviragus was with the desire of vengeance, and taught as he had been from childhood to regard revenge as a religious duty, Linus felt that it was not the proper time to speak to him of the true God, who has said, 'Avenge not yourselves.' 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay' (Rom. xii. 19).





CHAPTER V.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

‘Frantic with regret
For her he loves, and never can forget,
Deprived of her and freedom at a blow—
What has he left that he can yet forego?’

COWPER.

ARVIRAGUS resolved to be more and more diligent, punctual, and exact in doing all that was required of him.

The activity that others showed from fear, he showed from pride. Whatever he did, he resolved should be done in the best manner. Having felt from the first the impossibility of resistance, he had never attempted it, and he had resolved to gain approbation by doing even more than was exacted of him. He thus avoided the reproofs or punishments which would most cruelly have

reminded him of his servitude ; and his very obedience appeared like voluntary submission.

This good behaviour won for him the favour of the steward ; and the principal charioteer having died, Arviragus was chosen to fill his place.

Corvinus had left Rome only from weariness. Tired of feasting, of luxury, and of noise, he imagined that solitude would be an agreeable novelty.

He even tried an experiment of a kind of life then much in fashion among the patricians of Rome. He caused to be prepared in his splendid villa an apartment covered with mats, with scarcely any furniture in it, exactly like the dwellings of the poor. Here he shut himself up for some days, attended by only one slave. His food was *puls*, a kind of porridge made of a coarse species of wheat, with a little bread and pot-herbs, which were served up to him in dishes of clay, and which he ate seated at a table with three feet, such as was used by the common people. But he was very soon tired of this frugal life. He longed

to return to the luxury and amusement of the city, and gave orders for his return to Rome.

The new office of Arviragus obliged him to go out with his master in his daily drives. The carriage which Corvinus generally used was a magnificent vehicle, decorated with gold, silver, and precious stones. The bits of the horses were made of gold, and the coverings for their backs were adorned with gold and crimson. In the drive frequented by the patricians, all the best society in Rome was to be found. There were women famed for their beauty, their riches, or their elegance; the inheritors of large fortunes; and the senators, and those enriched by denouncing others, or by receiving bribes; the favourites of the Emperor, and the degenerate descendants of those knights whose ancestors had won the name of *Trossila* after the siege of a city in Etruria.

One day that Arviragus was out with his master as usual, there was a block in the street which obliged the Numidians who preceded the chariot to stop. Metella, the well-known Roman matron, was passing, preceded and followed by numerous

slaves. She was reclining in a *lectica*, or litter, borne by slaves. She lay extended on a soft mattress stuffed with feathers, and she was supported in a half-sitting posture by cushions, some of which were filled with down, and others with rose leaves. Her *stola*, or loose tunic, was of the richest material, confined at the waist by a girdle, and ornamented at the neck by a coloured border. Over this was thrown her *palla*, or cloak. As the great object of vanity among women under the Empire was yellow hair, a wig of this colour was substituted for her natural locks; and over this was a veil of such fine material that it almost appeared as if the wind would blow it away. She was richly adorned with jewels, and, to shade her from the heat, a young slave walked beside her, holding over her palm leaves adorned with peacock's feathers, and fixed at the end of a handle of bamboo. Two African slaves walked before her *lectica*, each wearing a dress of Egyptian linen of dazzling whiteness, and bracelets of silver. They were followed by a slave carrying a foot-stool, inlaid with ivory, for the lady to descend

from the *lectica*; and she was followed by about a hundred slaves, all richly dressed.

Arviragus glanced for a moment at this splendid procession, and then turned away his eyes with indifference. Since he had been accustomed to drive the chariot of Corvinus, he had daily seen such spectacles.

Almost all the slaves in the suite of Metella had already passed; the Numidians belonging to Corvinus had moved on, and Arviragus was about to follow them, when a loud cry was heard a few steps behind him. The young Briton turned quickly. A woman had left the procession of the slaves of Metella, and was holding out her arms to him.

‘My mother!’ exclaimed the boy, letting fall the reins in his surprise.

The horses, feeling themselves at liberty, started off at full gallop. Arviragus in vain attempted to restrain them; all his efforts only made them run the faster. At last, despairing of being able to recover the reins, he threw himself from the chariot and looked around him.

He was by this time far from the place where

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he had seen Norva. He ran back as fast as he could, hoping to overtake her, as the *lectica* of Metella was proceeding at a very slow pace; but he was entangled among the horsemen and carriages. Half bewildered, he rushed on wildly, being pushed about, and receiving blows almost without being aware of it, so great was his excitement. He hastened along the Appian Way, but in vain. There was no trace of Metella or her train.

It is impossible to describe the despair of Arviragus. Yet he felt somewhat comforted by thinking that it would now be easy for him to find Norva, since he had heard the name of her mistress. He was thinking how he should discover where Metella lived, when one of the slaves of Corvinus came in search of him, told him that the runaway horses had been stopped, and desired him to come back to his duty.

Arviragus obeyed, after hesitating for a moment—it was so painful to give up the hope of seeing his mother.

His master, although perfectly unaccustomed to be kept waiting, said nothing to him when

he took his place on the chariot; but as soon as they had returned home, he said a few words to his steward. Arviragus did not hear what his master said, but he understood it only too well when he saw the slave appear whose duty it was to inflict punishment, carrying in his hand the dreaded *furca*. This was a heavy collar of wood, shaped like the letter V, which was frequently attached to the necks of offending slaves, who were sometimes scourged as they moved painfully along under the burden.

Arviragus turned pale, and uttered an exclamation of surprise. The slave smiled. 'Well, little one,' said he, 'you have come to me at last. You have been rather long in making my acquaintance. Our master is too good; the punishment he has ordered you is a mere trifle. If you had been the slave of a freedman, he would have thrown you into the fish-pond to be eaten by the lampreys.'

While the slave spoke, he fastened the *furca* to the neck and shoulders of Arviragus. He tied his arms to the two extremities of it, and then chained the boy to a stake placed near the entrance of the

house ; then, looking at the boy, the cruel man said, with a scornful laugh :

‘You are in an excellent place to take the air ; and as night is coming on, you may amuse yourself by studying the stars.’ So saying, he waved his hand to Arviragus and disappeared.

The boy had kept silence : his body was upright, his head proudly raised, his looks scornful ; but his heart was bursting with grief and anger. At this moment he would have endured any punishment with pleasure, provided Corvinus could have been ordered to endure it also.

His distress was increased by the thought of his mother. But for the disgraceful punishment to which he had been condemned, he would have found his mother again, and might have been with her at that moment. She was doubtless expecting him, and perhaps blaming him for his delay.

He was in utter despondency, when he heard his name repeated several times. His heart beat—he thought he knew the voice—he turned his head. A woman rushed towards him : it was Norva.

Arviragus, exhausted by suffering, almost fainted in the arms of his mother : for some time he could neither hear nor see. Never before had such deep emotion stirred his young heart. As to Norva, the delight of seeing her son was mingled with her grief for his sufferings : she wept and laughed by turns ; clasping her boy in her arms, she kissed him fondly.

When they were somewhat more calm, Arviragus told his mother why he had been punished. When Norva heard that she was the involuntary cause of it, she wept bitterly.

The boy tried to comfort her. The joy of seeing her had completely extinguished every other feeling : he neither thought of the *furca*, nor of the chains which bound him. He would have been willing to remain thus for any length of time, provided he could have had his mother near him.

Norva seated herself at his feet, and told him that, after she had discovered the name of his master, she had fled from the house of Metella, thinking only of seeing her boy again, without

considering the consequences of her flight. She questioned him about what he had done, and thought of, and felt during the long years that they had been separated. For her part, she had endured all the torments of slavery.

Like all women who are chiefly occupied with their beauty and their dress, Metella was utterly selfish and merciless. When her vanity was wounded in the slightest degree, she revenged on her slaves the offences that had been given her by others. Her displeasure, her impatience, her caprice, every trifling disappointment or annoyance, was marked by some cruel punishment inflicted on those who served her. She felt a kind of ferocious pleasure in seeing them suffer. For the slightest negligence, she obliged them to kneel down before her, and to swell out their cheeks, that she might more easily strike them on the face. She had bought Norva and Morgan at the same time. Morgan had already suffered the lash three times, because he had refused to submit to the humiliation of kneeling before her.

Arviragus listened with a burning heart to this

sorrowful recital ; and while he deeply sympathized with his mother, he felt with gratitude that his lot was happier in being the slave of the *sybarite* Corvinus.

Meantime, Linus had heard of the punishment to which Arviragus had been condemned. Corvinus soon afterwards visited the library, to see some of the manuscripts which Linus was engaged in transcribing. He expressed his satisfaction with what had been done, and Linus took advantage of this favourable opportunity to ask for the pardon of Arviragus. Corvinus granted it, and the young Briton was soon delivered from his bonds.

He then went with his mother to a quiet place apart, where he could converse with her with more freedom.

For some hours Norva and her son completely forgot their situation, and where they were. They talked of Britain in their dear native language ; they recalled the circumstances of their past lives, the names of those whom they had known, the places where they had been so happy. Arviragus spoke with the accent, and remembered the feel-

ings and thoughts of his childhood. He forgot that he was a slave in Rome. He fancied himself for a moment what he had been,—the son of a great British chief, seated at his father's hearth, and learning from his mother traditions of his people.

Night came on, and neither Norva nor her son perceived it. Under the blue sky of Italy, in which the stars were now appearing, they continued to converse of their distant home, without regarding the flight of time. Arviragus confided to his mother his hopes of freedom, and the means by which he expected to obtain it.

‘Morgan also speaks to us of deliverance,’ said Norva; ‘but it is with iron, not with gold, that he trusts to obtain it.’

‘Is it possible that he is thinking of a revolt?’ asked Arviragus eagerly.

‘I fear he is,’ replied Norva. ‘Morgan keeps up communication with the slaves belonging to our nation. The greater part of them have spent their *peculium* in secretly buying arms, and on the first favourable opportunity they will raise the

war-cry. The Dacians and the Germans are also plotting mysteriously ; and I often hear the name of Spartacus repeated in a low tone.'

The eyes of Arviragus sparkled. Norva perceived it, and, clasping the hand of her boy with anxious tenderness, she said :

'Remember that you are too young to take any part in such an enterprise.'

'I am fifteen,' replied Arviragus rather impatiently.

'You have not attained the age of a warrior ; you know that,' said Norva. 'In order to maintain with honour the great name that you bear, your arms must be stronger and more exercised than they are. Morgan says so ; and, for my part, I forbid you to have anything to do with this revolt.'

'I shall obey you, mother,' replied Arviragus in a low tone, unable to restrain the tears which came into his eyes.

Norva drew him towards her, and kissing him kindly, she said :

'Do not grieve, my boy. I trust you will be

spared to become a man, and then I shall have no more power over you; you may then decide for yourself whether you will join those who meditate a revolt. But at present it is your duty to obey me, and let me use my authority over you to preserve your life. Let me enjoy the privileges of a mother for the short time that remains. Alas! my power will soon cease—you will be no longer mine; do not grudge to obey the last commands I have to give you. It seems so short a time since I held you a little baby in my arms. To-day I may still command you. Very soon you will be a man; and then I shall have no right to control you. Alas! even now I cannot do as I would the duty of a mother; I cannot remain with you; I cannot protect you.'

Norva uttered these words with a voice so gentle and sad, that Arviragus was deeply touched by what she said. He clasped her to his heart, called her by the most tender names, and promised to obey all her wishes without the slightest regret.



CHAPTER VI.

NORVA.

‘ When the British warrior-queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country’s gods,

‘ Sage beneath the spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Ev’ry burning word he spoke
Full of rage and full of grief.

‘ Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
’Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.’

COWPER.

THE night had passed away while the mother and son conversed. The day began to dawn, and Norva at last thought of returning to the house of her mistress, hoping that she might not have been missed. The boy asked and received permission to accompany her.

They were descending Mount Cœlius together when they saw a band of men approaching, under the command of a freedman.

When Norva saw them she stopped in terror.

‘These are the *fugitivarii* (those employed to take runaway slaves), and a freedman belonging to Metella,’ said she. ‘They have been sent to seize me.’

The freedman recognised Norva : the men came up quickly and surrounded her.

‘We have caught you at last,’ said the freedman.

‘What do you mean?’ exclaimed Norva.

‘Have you not fled from your mistress?’

‘I was returning to her.’

The freedman laughed scornfully.

‘All runaway slaves say the same thing,’ said he. ‘Bind her hands, and bring her along with us.’

Norva wished to explain the cause of her absence, but she was commanded to be silent.

Arviragus could not succeed in getting them to listen to any explanation ; and notwithstanding

all that he could say, he saw his mother bound and dragged away.

‘What are you going to do with her?’ asked the terrified boy.

‘Do you not know what is done to fugitive slaves? Lest they should be lost a second time, they are branded with a hot iron on the forehead.’

Arviragus uttered a cry of terror. ‘It is impossible,’ said he. ‘I shall go and see your mistress. I shall throw myself at her feet. I shall implore pardon for my mother.’

‘If you trouble her, she will inflict the same punishment on you,’ interrupted the freedman.

‘On me!’ exclaimed the boy. ‘I do not belong to her.’

‘She may do as she likes to you by paying damages to Corvinus,’ said the freedman. ‘Do you forget that a slave is not a person, but a chattel? You are just like any other piece of furniture, however valuable you are. Suppose Metella should break a precious vase belonging to Corvinus, she would be obliged to pay him

the value of it. So it is with you. If she brands you or maims you, she must pay the damage to your master, and that is all. And I can tell you, Metella does not care for money, compared with her love for her own will.'

'Oh, leave me! leave me! do not run any risk for me,' exclaimed the anxious and terrified mother. But Arviragus scarcely heard what she said. He followed the party till they reached the house of Metella. The steward was summoned, and came to inquire into the matter. Arviragus in vain endeavoured to explain—in vain tried to soften the hard-hearted man—in vain implored pardon for his mother; he was rudely repulsed.

'Is there no way of saving my mother?' asked the boy in despair.

'Buy her,' said the steward ironically.

'Buy her!' repeated Arviragus. 'Can I buy her? Will you sell her to me?'

'Certainly,' was the answer. 'Have you never heard of a *vicarius*?'

Arviragus knew that many of his fellow-slaves

had others under them, who were hardly treated, and employed in the roughest work. He remembered also what the interpreter had told him about the purchase of slaves by slaves, and that they bought them with their *peculium*.

‘What sum do you require for my mother’s freedom?’ asked he, trembling with anxiety.

‘Three thousand sesterces,’ was the reply.

The boy clasped his hands in despair.

‘I have only two thousand,’ murmured he.

But a gleam of hope flashed through his mind. Many of his fellow-slaves had amassed a *peculium*. Perhaps they would not refuse to lend him each a small sum, and he might thus collect the money that was necessary.

He hastened to speak again to the steward, who was just entering the house.

‘I will soon return with the three thousand sesterces you demand,’ said he in a suppliant tone. ‘I entreat you to wait. Promise me only to delay the punishment for some hours.’

‘I shall await for some hours your return,’ said the steward, moved by the boy’s entreaties.

Arviragus thanked him warmly—bade a hasty farewell to his mother, weeping bitterly—told her to wait and trust in his efforts, and proceeded in all haste to the house of Corvinus.

He went in the first place to count his *peculium*. As he thought, a thousand sesterces were required to complete the necessary sum. He hastened to implore assistance from the slaves that he thought might be able and willing to help him.

None of his friends were to be found—all was uproar in the house of Corvinus. Pursued by his creditors, whose usurious loans had hastened his ruin, the young patrician had just quitted his dwelling, when it was invaded by the officers of the law. Placards containing a copy of the decree of the magistrates, and announcing the sale of all his property, were placed above the threshold. The principal creditors, the officials who were to preside at the sale, and the treasurer who was to receive the money, were all present. They were just finishing the inventory of the property that belonged to Corvinus.

At that moment Arviragus appeared carrying in his hand the clay vase which contained his *peculium*. He was observed by one of the creditors, who was deputed by the others to watch the sale.

‘What have you there?’ he asked the boy.

‘My *peculium*,’ replied Arviragus.

‘How much does it amount to?’

‘To two thousand sesterces.’

‘That will help to pay the debts of Corvinus,’ said the creditor, holding out his hand to take the vase which contained the poor boy’s savings.

‘The money belongs to me,’ said Arviragus, trying to keep hold of the vase.

‘It belongs to your master, slave,’ replied the creditor; ‘you have nothing of your own, not even your life. Give me these two thousand sesterces at once, or beware of the lash.’

‘No! never!’ exclaimed Arviragus, clasping his treasure still tighter. ‘I have saved this *peculium* by depriving myself of food and of sleep; I intend it to help to redeem my mother. She is now threatened with the punishment that

fugitive slaves have to suffer, unless I can pay three thousand sesterces to her mistress. Ah, I implore you, do not take this money from me. If I cannot claim it by law, be so kind as to let me have it, for mercy's sake! You have mothers—have mercy on mine! Mercy, mercy! I implore it on my knees!’

The young Briton knelt before the creditors. The treasurer shrugged his shoulders, and made a sign to the officials to begin the sale. They approached Arviragus and tried to take from him the vase which contained his money: the boy screamed and struggled furiously, but he was not strong enough to resist the men, and he was soon deprived of his all—was thrown down and left powerless.

He rose covered with dust, and mad with passion; he looked around for any weapon that he could use. The officials seized hold of him with scornful laughter. Angry as they were, they forgot his value as a slave, and thrust him out into the street and closed the gate.

Arviragus lay for some time almost unconscious

—how long he knew not. When he recovered his senses, he struck his head violently with his fists, as though he wished to punish himself for his helplessness. At that moment a hand was gently laid on his shoulder. He turned and saw that Linus stood beside him.

‘What is the matter, my boy?’ asked he.

‘My mother! my mother!’ said Arviragus, sobbing so violently that he was unable to utter another word.

The Armenian tried to calm him by kind and soothing words, and entreated him to say what had happened to grieve him so much.

When Arviragus had told the cause of his distress, Linus said :

‘Be comforted ; I can help you. I have escaped notice—my *peculium* has not been seized. It amounts to four thousand sesterces, and you shall have it all.’

Arviragus started with surprise, scarcely daring to believe his ears.

‘Come quickly,’ said Linus ; ‘I have deposited my savings in the hands of a friend who lives at

a distance from this place. Let us go and ask him for the money.'

The young Briton tried to stammer out his thanks—he was almost too much overcome to speak ; and Linus told him to say no more about it.

'When we can do good to our neighbour, if we do it in a right spirit and from a right motive,' said he, 'we do far more good to ourselves. We give to others a small portion of our worldly goods, with which we must soon part in any case ; but if we obey the command of our God, to give to those that need, and "to do to others as we would that they should do to us," our God will bless us ; and His blessing is better than all the riches in the world. Our God has said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you."'

At any other time Arviragus would have eagerly desired to know more about a God so unlike the gods his fathers had worshipped, and he would have questioned Linus about the meaning of his words ; but at that moment the poor boy was so absorbed in the thought of his mother, that he

did not even hear what Linus had said. He could think of nothing but his mother's danger.

While Linus was speaking, he and Arviragus were at the same time hastening as quickly as possible to the house of the Jew to whom Linus had entrusted his *peculium*. When they arrived there the Jew was not at home ; they were obliged to wait.

The anguish of Arviragus was terrible. Every moment seemed an hour. He trembled lest he should arrive too late. But nothing more could be done ; he could do nothing but wait.

Meantime, Metella had risen rather sooner than was her usual habit. She was in a very bad temper, which was not unusual. The evening before, she had seen a lady more beautifully dressed than herself, who had attracted much of the admiration that was in general bestowed on the rich Metella. Some of her flatterers had been less assiduous ; a rival had sneered at her with well-bred scorn ; and there was a whole host of minor grievances, for which several of her unhappy slaves had already suffered on various

pretexts. While Norva was lying in the same house a miserable captive, awaiting a horrible punishment for her love to her son, Metella, who loved no one but herself, was seated at her toilet, which the Roman author Livy says was, in his day, '*mundus mulieris*' (a woman's world). This was perfectly true in Metella's case: her dress and ornaments were her 'world.' Metella was a heathen; but is it not to be feared that there are some Metellas still, even among professing Christians?

Metella was surrounded by the slaves whose peculiar duty it was to wait upon her while she was dressing. Some of these did nothing but give directions to the others. There were also the *ornatrix*, or hairdresser, and the *ciniflones*, or *cinerarii*, the slaves who assisted in frizzling and adjusting the hair, and in dyeing it the yellow colour that was then in fashion, and all the numerous women who took care of her dresses and her jewels.

On her toilet-table were placed pots of *ceruse*, or white lead, or of chalk, to whiten the skin,

vermilion to redden the cheeks, and black powder to paint the eyelids and eyebrows. There were vases of perfumes of various sorts, obtained from sweet-smelling herbs and flowers. The most costly kinds were kept in small flasks of alabaster or onyx, made with long necks so narrow that they allowed the precious contents to escape only drop by drop. If it was desired to obtain the whole at once, it was necessary to break off the neck.*

Necklaces of gold and costly jewels, earrings and bracelets of immense value, pearls for the hair, embroidered ribbons with clasps and buckles to fasten them, were all laid out in readiness, that Metella might choose which she would wear. There were mirrors of various kinds made of polished silver, some of them in golden frames set with precious stones. The slaves held up the mirror before their vain mistress. Others were frizzling her hair with hot irons, and raising up

* The same kind of flasks were used among the Jews while they were under the dominion of the Romans. The woman who anointed our Saviour's feet *broke* the 'alabaster box of very precious ointment.'

a lofty pile of false hair over it in successive rolls, which they fixed with hair-pins. These mounds of false and frizzled hair are mentioned by the Roman authors Juvenal, Suetonius, Horace, Tertullian, and others. Surely, as the wise king Solomon said, 'There is nothing new under the sun;,' for in modern days have we not seen dyed yellow locks, and rolls or mounds of hair called 'chignons,' and frizzled hair curled with hot irons? and may we not add with the same wise king, 'All this is vanity?'

The unfortunate slave who was dressing the hair of Metella, chanced to place a lock out of the proper place, and her angry mistress ordered the whip to be speedily used to make the unhappy creature more careful. Another slave held the mirror slightly to one side, when Metella snatched it from her and threw it at her head.*

'Send Norva here, the British slave,' said she impatiently; 'she holds the mirror more steadily.'

No one had as yet dared to mention Norva, but now the directress of the female slaves was

* Martial, ii. 66.

reluctantly obliged to tell her mistress of Norva's flight and recapture.

'Has she been branded?' was Metella's first question.

She was told that the operation had been delayed for a few hours, to permit ransom-money to be provided.

'I will not sell her,' said Metella angrily. 'Who dares suppose so? Let her be branded at once; I will have no delay.'

No one ventured to remonstrate. A slave went to give the order that the noble British matron should be tortured; and Metella—finished her toilet!

Metella, dressed in the most splendid attire, went to the reception-room, where her flatterers were waiting for her. There was still a frown on her brow, and her face wore an expression of annoyance.

'Has anything happened to vex the lovely Metella?' asked one of her parasites.

'Nothing of much consequence,' said Metella; 'only, that one of my slaves chose to run away

last night. She has been caught, and I have ordered her to be branded. Of course we must make an example, to prevent others from doing the same. But, unfortunately, she is very useful at my toilet. You know, branding is a painful operation; and I fear that she will not be able for her work for some time. It is an annoyance, is it not?' added she, appealing to one of her particular friends. 'I fear my hair is scarcely so well done as usual.'

'Your hair is beautiful, gracious lady,' was the reply. 'But everything is becoming that is worn by Metella.'

'And is the dignified Norva really to be branded?' said one of the idlers present. 'I should like to see the operation. She is too grand for a slave; she looks as if she had been born to be an empress.'

'All these Britons are proud,' said Metella. 'One would think that they fancied themselves the masters of the world, born to rule the earth; but we have taught them another lesson lately. However, as to Norva, I have heard that she

really was the wife of a prince among these savages.'

'Well,' was the reply, 'it is amazing to think that the British princess will soon be distinguished here also. When the letters are burnt indelibly on her forehead, she will be quite one of the *literati*' (or lettered people); and the heartless parasite laughed at his own jest.

Meantime, Arviragus and Linus were waiting in anxious suspense for the man who had the charge of Linus's *peculium*. After hours that seemed years of agony, the Jew returned at last. The four thousand sesterces belonging to Linus were given by him to the young Briton, who, without losing a moment, ran off as fast as he could to the house of Metella.

When he reached the threshold he heard a horrible cry—a cry of agony. His blood ran cold—he almost fainted—he leant against the wall, to save himself from falling.

The gate opened, and Morgan appeared. 'You are too late; all is over,' said the old Druid in a grave but compassionate tone.

‘Where is my mother? where is she?’ exclaimed Arviragus impetuously.

Without replying, Morgan took him by the arm and led him into a court in the house of Metella.

The court was filled with slaves, who were whispering to each other. In the middle stood the slave appointed to inflict punishment. Near him there was a pan of burning charcoal. Norva was prostrate at his feet!

Arviragus rushed towards her, holding out his arms; but as he approached her he uttered a cry of horror,—a mist came before his eyes, his limbs failed him, and he fell fainting beside his mother.





CHAPTER VII.

THE REVOLT OF THE SLAVES.

'Slavery!—Virtue dreads it as her grave.
Patience itself is meanness in a slave;
Or if the will and sovereignty of God
Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And snap the chain the moment when you may.'

COWPER.

TWO hours afterwards Norva was lying on the mat which served her for a bed. Her hands were clasped in those of her son, and she murmured his name in a feeble voice. Morgan, with his head cast down and his arms folded, was standing near them.

The poor mother, who felt that Arviragus was near her, tried to repress any expression of suffering, and even attempted to smile; but her smile was so sad, that it seemed to send a cold chill to

the heart of her son. A piece of linen had been wrapped round her forehead, from which blood was slowly oozing. She could not open her eyelids, which were swollen by pain and weeping; her lips were pale, and she breathed with difficulty. She was exhausted by the agony she had suffered; and her nervous system was shaken not only by the pain, but by the disgrace and humiliation she had endured. She, the wife of a noble British chief, had been scourged and branded like a criminal!

Arviragus restrained his tears and sobs, lest his grief should add to the sufferings of his mother; but the few hours of agony through which he had passed, had changed his appearance as if he had endured months of illness. Leaning over Norva's couch, he watched her every movement with an anxious and terrified look, and heard with deep distress her laboured breathing.

Suddenly the dying woman stretched out her arms, and made an effort to sit up.

‘Arviragus,’ murmured she, ‘where are you? Where is your hand? I do not feel you near me!’

Oh! clasp me to your heart. Do not leave me, Arviragus, my poor boy——’

Her head fell on the shoulder of her son; she seemed quite exhausted. For a few moments there was a terrible silence. Arviragus was overwhelmed with grief; he was unable to speak.

‘My dear mother!’ said he at length, in a stifled voice.

‘She is gone! She is with your father!’ said Morgan in a low tone.

The boy tried to raise his mother’s head, but it fell back on the low couch. He saw that all was over. He was an orphan!

It is impossible to describe his agony. His despair was so terrible, that even the usually calm Morgan was alarmed. The poor boy had been so much excited by contending emotions for so many hours, that his strength was quite exhausted. He was consumed by a burning fever; he became first unconscious, then quite delirious. At length his ravings were succeeded by utter exhaustion.

Morgan, who had never left his side, took advantage of a moment when he seemed more com-

posed, to whisper a few words fitted to arouse his courage :

‘Poor boy, the tyrants have killed your mother,’ said the old Druid. ‘It is useless now to weep for her ; think rather of avenging her.’

‘Avenging her !’ repeated Arviragus in a hollow tone. ‘Ah ! what can I do ?’

‘Try to recover strength to follow me when the hour comes for our revenge !’ said Morgan.

The boy sprang up at once.

‘Let us go now ; I am ready !’ said he.

‘We must wait,’ said the old man. ‘The hour is not yet come ; but be sure that it will. And the longer the delay, the more terrible will be our vengeance !’

Morgan then confided to Arviragus the plot designed by the slaves. The revolt was to take place in the very heart of Rome. Their intentions were to set fire to the city in several places at once, and to kill all the tyrants who might escape the flames.

The boy listened with ferocious pleasure to these details, which promised to afford full satisfaction to his thirst for revenge. He had been

early taught, and he firmly believed, that these bloody sacrifices were necessary to appease the *manes* of Norva.

Among the Romans, souls separated from their bodies were called *manes*. The *manes* were supposed to be delighted with blood; therefore animals, as well as men, slaves, or captives, were often slaughtered at the funeral pile. The blood of enemies was also considered a sacrifice to the *manes* of the dead. Horace speaks in one of his odes, of the descendants of the conquerors being offered as sacrifices to the *manes* of Jugurtha. Cæsar says that among the Gauls slaves and clients were burned on the piles of their masters.

As similar feelings were prevalent among the Britons, Arviragus thought that he could best show his love to his mother by causing Roman blood to flow. He considered this not only as a personal satisfaction, but as a holy duty which he owed to the departed.

The hope he now entertained of satisfying the *manes* of his mother, seemed to restore his strength and nerve him to exertion. He strove to subdue

his grief, and to await with patience the signal for action.

He had not to wait long: the plans of the slaves were nearly arranged.

At the concerted signal many hundreds appeared in the Forum armed, and with torches in their hands. But they had been betrayed; their designs had been discovered; the Consuls had been warned. The necessary measures had been quietly taken by the authorities to crush the revolt, and the slaves soon found themselves surrounded by Roman soldiers.

Many of the slaves threw down their arms and sought safety in flight. Some of the Germans and Britons, among whom were Morgan and Arviragus, attempted a brave but hopeless resistance. Overpowered by numbers, they were either killed or made prisoners.

Morgan and Arviragus were wounded; and as their captors expected to extort from them some useful confessions respecting the plot, they were imprisoned in separate dungeons; but care was taken to dress their wounds.

Both recovered ; but no questioning and no amount of torture could force them to betray their accomplices. They were therefore thrown into the prison where the victims were confined who were to be devoured by wild beasts.

When they met again, they clasped each other's hands without exchanging a word, and sat down together. Their last hope of freedom was gone, and they were to die vanquished ! They remained long silent.

'I cannot now avenge my mother's death,' said Arviragus sadly.

'Our gods have not permitted us to succeed,' replied Morgan.

'Of what use, then, are these gods?' asked Arviragus, with bitter scorn. 'They can neither defend us in our own country, nor protect us in slavery here. Why should we worship them if they have no power ? And if they have any power, why do they forsake us ? The gods of Rome are the true gods, for they alone seem to favour and protect their worshippers.'

'Let us call upon them, then,' said Morgan

sarcastically. 'Do you think they will listen to the voice of a slave? They grant their favours only to our masters. We, whom they delivered to the Romans, consider them not as gods, but as enemies.'

'So then Rome, which calls herself the mistress of the world, will only suffer other nations to exist, in order to make them her slaves or her beasts of burden! Why, then, were we born? It were better for the child that has just seen the light, that it should cease to exist. What evil power can have created the earth, if it is to be for ever abandoned to injustice and slavery!'

'The kingdom of peace, righteousness, and freedom is near at hand,' said a gentle voice.

Arviragus looked round with surprise, and was still more astonished to see that the speaker was Linus.

'You here!' exclaimed he. 'Did you also nobly rise against our oppressors?'

'No,' replied the Armenian; 'I am condemned to be devoured by wild beasts, only because I worship a God such as you were just wishing

and longing for to be your protector and saviour.'

'What do you mean? What is your religion?'

'I am a Christian.'

Arviragus looked at Linus with much surprise. He had often heard the name of Christian spoken of with contempt. He had heard it said that Christianity was the religion of criminals and wretches; that it was a fable invented by the Jews, that had misled the lowest of the people, who are always pleased with any novelty.

'If your God is good,' said the son of Norva, 'He is then powerless, since He abandons you to your enemies.'

'My God is all-powerful,' replied Linus. 'He is God alone, and there is no God but Him. Power belongeth unto Him; the sea is His, for He made it; His hands formed the dry land. He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; He upholds all things by the word of His power. Wisdom and might are His. There is none like unto Him.

With Him nothing is impossible : the things that are impossible with men, are possible with God.'

'Then, if He can do all things, and if He does not save you from your enemies, He cannot be good and kind,' said Arviragus.

'My God is good,' said Linus solemnly. 'His name is love. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness !'

'Then why, if He is so powerful and so good,' asked Arviragus, 'does He leave you here without help—to the mercy of your enemies ?'

'My God loves me,' replied Linus, 'and He has chosen me to maintain before men the glory of His name. The chief end for which I was created is, that I may glorify His great name here, and then that I may go to enjoy eternal happiness in His presence for ever.'

'How can you glorify His name in prison and in death ?' asked Arviragus. 'I could understand that you would give your life for Him in battle.'

'Our God wishes us to be ready to suffer rather

than fight for His sake,' said Linus. 'Our God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, suffered for us. He, the Captain of our salvation, was made "perfect through suffering," that His people may obtain eternal glory. Therefore His followers are ready to suffer and die; for, as my great teacher Paul said, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The sufferings of this life are short, and soon pass away; but the crown of glory that His followers shall receive fadeth not away.'

'And when will they receive this crown of glory?' asked Arviragus.

'After death,' replied Linus solemnly. 'Death is the gate through which we enter into life. Then why should we fear to die, since after death we go to the blessed mansions which our Lord Jesus Christ has prepared for them that love Him? All must die; but have we not reason to rejoice that we can sustain His cause and glorify His great name in death?'

‘How can you do this?’ asked Arviragus.

‘When Christians appear to die in the sight of the assembled people,’ replied Linus; ‘when they are threatened with torture, and still choose rather to suffer than to deny their Lord Jesus Christ; when to the temptations of their enemies they still reply, “I am a Christian,”—do you not think that all the spectators are astonished at their courage? And they naturally ask, “What kind of religion is this which enables men not only to die bravely, but even rejoicing in the hope of glory—not only resigned to suffer, but freely forgiving their persecutors?”’

‘Then have Christians no fear of death?’ asked Arviragus.

‘My great teacher Paul,’ replied Linus, ‘said, “I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.”’

‘Can you tell me anything of these happy mansions?’ asked Arviragus,—‘where those who depart are with Christ?’

‘We are told but little of them,’ replied Linus; ‘because, I suppose, that in this world we could

not understand how great and glorious they are :
“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” But we know that in these mansions God Himself shall be with His people, to be their God : “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” But the best of all is, that in these blessed mansions His people will be for ever with their Lord ; and where He is, there is perfect bliss. No words can describe their happiness and their glory !’

‘Linus, my friend,’ said Arviragus earnestly, ‘teach me to be a Christian. I wish to die a Christian !’



CHAPTER VIII.

LINUS IN PRISON.

‘Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad ; for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.’—MATT. v. 10–12.

FROM the day when they met in a Roman prison, Linus preached the good news of salvation to his fellow-sufferers. Arviragus was constantly by his side.

‘Tell me what it is to be a Christian ?’ asked Arviragus.

‘A Christian believes in the only true God, who has made heaven and earth, and all that therein is ; and in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has died for us. All the false gods which are now worshipped in Rome will soon

fall to the dust. They are only wood and stone, and cannot help or protect their worshippers. I will read to you what my great teacher Paul said about the gods of Greece and Rome when he saw the superstitious worship of the Athenians:—"God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device. And the times

of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.”

‘Then you really believe,’ said Arviragus, ‘that we shall rise again from the dead?’

‘Certainly I do,’ replied Linus. ‘My great teacher Paul told me so. He said that our natural bodies should be raised up spiritual bodies.’

‘Who is this Paul; and why do you believe what he says?’ asked Arviragus.

‘He is one who saw the Lord,’ replied Linus solemnly. ‘At one time he was an enemy of the Christians, and their persecutor. But when he was going from Jerusalem to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,—as he journeyed, our Lord Himself met him on the way and spoke to him, and from that time Paul preached the faith which he once tried to destroy.’

‘Was he here in Rome?’ asked Arviragus. ‘Or where did you see him?’

‘He was a learned man among the Jews; but he was also a Roman citizen,’ replied Linus. ‘He was a citizen of Tarsus—no mean city. So, when the Jews accused him, he appealed to Cæsar, as he had a right to do, and he was sent to Rome. There were some wonderful stories told about his voyage and his shipwreck, which caused many to be curious to see him. Some of them went as far as Appii Forum to meet him. Although he was a prisoner, he was well treated. He lived by himself in his own hired house with a soldier who guarded him, and he was allowed to see any one, and to receive all who came to him. He made use of this opportunity to proclaim the good news of salvation, and I was one of those who listened to him gladly.’

‘Did Paul suffer for the sake of Christ?’ asked Arviragus.

‘I will read to you his own account of what he suffered,’ said Linus. ‘He endured stripes and imprisonment. He says: “Of the Jews five times

received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." He adds: "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." He was beheaded at last, and he died rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for Christ,—rejoicing that nothing could separate him from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Linus then told Arviragus the grand truths of the gospel. He told him of the Saviour's birth, announced to distant countries by a star; he spoke of the angel who told the good tidings to the shepherds on Bethlehem's plain, and of the multitude of the heavenly host who praised

God and said, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.'

Linus told Arviragus also of the wonderful life of our Saviour, and the miracles He did,—the holy words He said; how He was unjustly accused, and died on the cross for the sins of many, that our sins may be forgiven for His sake.

The words of Linus touched Arviragus deeply. The young fresh mind of the boy was enlightened by truths so new to him. Never had any ideas so grand and so consoling been before presented to his mind. He compared the Christian religion—a religion of love and of consolation—with the barbarous teachings of his boyhood. He contrasted the powerlessness of his heathen gods, who left him in his prison without consolation, with the glorious God of the Christians, who was ever with them; who supported them during their sufferings; and who promised them a happy home beyond the tomb.

While Arviragus welcomed the glorious truths taught by Linus, Morgan received them more slowly. Pride, the worst of Satan's snares, wrought

in his breast. Should he, a Druid, forsake the faith of his fathers, to worship one of whom they had never heard? However, he could not help hearing; and very soon Linus had no listener more attentive.

‘We had several of your countrymen,’ said Linus one day, ‘among those who listened to Paul. Several of Cæsar’s household were his disciples. The noble Lady Claudia was a believer in Christ; and she was a Briton. She, and her husband Pudens, were mentioned by Paul when he wrote to Timothy, to whom their salutations were sent.’

‘The Lady Claudia!’ said Morgan; ‘say rather the Princess Claudia, the daughter of our noble King. Was she of your faith?’

‘Doubtless she was,’ replied Linus; ‘and her husband also.’

From that time Morgan listened more attentively even than before to the words of Linus. The truth reached his heart: he learned to love his Saviour, and to be willing to suffer and die for His sake.



CHAPTER IX.

THE MARTYRS.

'Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt ;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

'Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states ;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark ! the Gaul is at her gates !'

COWPER.

ROME is in a state of the greatest excitement. There are to be games in the circus ; and it is rumoured that they will be better than have been seen for many a day. It is said that many trained gladiators are to fight even unto death ; that there are to be combats between wild beasts ; and that, better than all, there are Christians to be devoured.

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‘Games among the Romans,’ says Adams, ‘constituted a part of religious worship.’ It is scarcely possible to conceive the delight taken by the Romans in these cruel spectacles. They were as necessary to their existence as daily bread. ‘*Panem et Circenses*’ (bread and the circus games) had passed into a familiar proverb,—as if the one were as necessary as the other. The Roman would leave his home and his business, to sit for hours in discomfort, rather than lose his place in the circus. The enthusiastic spectators of murder and bloodshed brought their food with them, and on no account would they leave the place till they had beheld the result of the games. Incredible numbers of men were destroyed to entertain the Roman people. On one occasion spectacles were exhibited for a hundred and twenty-three days, in which eleven thousand animals of different kinds were killed, and ten thousand gladiators fought. Lions, elephants, and tigers, and even the African rhinoceros, were kept in enclosures called *vivaria* till the day of exhibition. When an emperor wished to become

popular, he pleased the people by giving one of these cruel spectacles, when Christians, slaves, and captives were torn to pieces.

For months before the games the gladiators were trained for their bloody work, and were daily exercised in fencing. The Roman gossips speculated upon the chances of the fight, and bets were freely given and taken, as they are now on horse-races.

While the gladiators were being trained for the combat, Linus was anxiously teaching and training his new converts to meet their terrible fate with composure, and trust in God. He told them that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, and that every one who died like a Christian, helped on the cause of Christ in the world, and promoted the glory of *His* kingdom,—who came to break the bonds of the slave, and set the captive free,—of His kingdom, which is righteousness and peace and joy. He told them of the glorious visions of St. John—of the heaven which now seemed so near; and in the dungeon these Christians sang the song of heaven as St.

John has given it, and as we now sing it translated
into our northern tongue :

‘How bright these glorious spirits shine !
Whence all their white array ?
How came they to the blissful seats
Of everlasting day ?
Lo ! these are they from sufferings great,
Who came to realms of light,
And in the blood of Christ have washed
Those robes which shine so bright.

‘Now, with triumphal palms, they stand
Before the throne on high,
And serve the God they love, amidst
The glories of the sky.
His presence fills each heart with joy,
Tunes every mouth to sing :
By day, by night, the sacred courts
With glad hosannas ring.

‘Hunger and thirst are felt no more,
Nor suns with scorching ray ;
God is their sun, whose cheering beams
Diffuse eternal day.
The Lamb which dwells amidst the throne
Shall o’er them still preside ;
Feed them with nourishment divine,
And all their footsteps guide.

‘Mong pastures green He’ll lead His flock,
Where living streams appear ;
And God the Lord from every eye
Shall wipe off every tear.’

Early on the day which was to be the last
on earth to the Christian captives, the Roman

citizens were crowding to the great circus, and jostling each other to get the best seats. The circus was so named from its oblong, circular form. It was a mile in circumference. In the centre was a large space called the arena (the Latin word for sand), because it was strewed with sand to absorb the blood. Round the arena were rows of seats, rising one above another. Conspicuous above all was the seat of the Emperor, elevated like a pulpit or tribunal, and covered with a canopy like a pavilion. Seats were set apart for the senators, the ambassadors of foreign nations, and the '*equites*,' or equestrian order. An honourable place was given to the priestesses of Vesta, the goddess of fire. These priestesses, or vestals, were highly honoured in Rome, as the prosperity of the city was supposed to depend upon their keeping up the sacred fire in the temple of Vesta. They often appeared in public processions dressed in robes of simple white, relieved only by narrow purple borders round their veils. To touch them, or even to obstruct their path, was an

offence punishable with death; and when they went out, they were accompanied and followed by the lictors of the State.

Long before the hour fixed for the games, crowds of the citizens had assembled, ready to wait for hours if they might get a good view of the sanguinary spectacle. They amused themselves, during these hours of waiting, by eating and drinking, and gossiping about the various notable persons who successively entered to take their seats. The number which this circus is said to have contained is variously estimated at from one hundred thousand to three hundred thousand persons; and all these were assembled to witness with pleasure the most disgusting scenes of cruelty, ferocity, murder, and bloodshed. The most fashionable ladies of Rome were there, richly dressed, and reclining on luxurious cushions; mothers were present with their babies in their arms—thus teaching them early to delight in cruelty. Conspicuous among the women by her magnificent dress and her blazing jewels, sat Metella. After

having tortured the mother to death, she had come to witness the last agonies of poor Norva's orphan boy.

Before the games began, the images of the gods were carried along in procession on carriages or on men's shoulders, with a great train of attendants, part on horseback and part on foot. Next followed the combatants, dancers, musicians, etc.

About noon, to the sound of martial music the folding doors under a spacious archway were flung open, and the gladiators, to the number of several hundreds, marched in. When they came to where the Emperor was sitting, they paused and saluted him with the words:

*'Ave, Cæsar ! morituri te salutant !'**

They then ranged themselves round the arena. Some of them were to fight in bands against each other, distinguished by the different colours they wore. A chosen band of picked men were appointed to fight, two and two, until one of them was killed, unless the crowd had been

* *'Hail, Cæsar ! those about to die salute thee !'*

pleased with his valour, and granted him mercy. But this very rarely happened. When a gladiator was wounded, the people exclaimed, '*Habet*' (he has got it). Then, if they wished his life to be saved, they held out their hands with their thumbs turned down; if to be slain, they turned up their thumbs; and the hardening influence of these odious scenes was so great, that the men were generally delivered to death. In many cases, the two men who were thus obliged to kill each other had been friends—may have been taken captive, fighting side by side—may have been trained in the same school, and eaten at the same table. Sometimes these attempted to fence harmlessly, not from dread of death or fear, but from a natural shrinking and aversion to slay a countryman and brother. But the inhuman audience soon perceived this, and urged them by fierce threats to mortal combat. The only kindness the victor could then bestow upon his friend, was to give him as speedy a death as possible. The death of a gladiator is thus described by a well-known poet:

'I see before me the gladiator lie :

He leans upon his hand—his manly brow

Consents to death, but conquers agony,

And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—

And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow

From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,

Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now

The arena swims around him : he is gone

Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch
who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not : his eyes

Were with his heart, and that was far away ;

He recked not of the life he lost, nor prized

But where his rude hut by the Danube lay—

There were his young barbarians all at play,

There was the Dacian mother—he, their sire,

Butchered to make a Roman holiday :

All this rushed with his blood—shall he expire,

And unavenged ? Arise, ye Goths, and glut your ire !'

A long description might be given of the refinements of torture practised to amuse the Roman populace, who were completely imbued with a love of the horrible and a taste for bloodshed. But it would be a hateful and odious task to enter more into details respecting the wild beasts set loose to kill each other, or to tear human victims to pieces. A description of such horrors could be pleasing only to those utterly lost to the feelings of humanity.

The time at last came when the Christian

captives were to be led forth to die, with two hundred others condemned to suffer along with them. In the front rank marched Linus, Arviragus, and Morgan, with Christian composure and resignation, willing to suffer for the sake of their Lord. Amid the crowd of ferocious and cruel faces which gazed upon them, the Christians seemed like angels among demons.

After the usual salutation to the Emperor, the victims were arranged in a conspicuous place in the arena—their guards retired—the keepers of the wild beasts stood at their posts, ready to let loose the lions and tigers, which had already tasted human blood, and had been kept without food to make them more ferocious.

There was a short space of breathless silence: the people sat motionless, with their eyes fixed on the arena. At this moment Linus exclaimed with a loud voice:

‘Romans! the God of the Christians is the only true God. We glory in confessing our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are willing to die for His sake.’



A signal was hastily given to prevent his saying more—the dens were opened—a horrible roaring was heard, and the hungry lions and tigers bounded into the arena.

From impulse, some of the victims made a vain attempt to fly. The Christians fell on their knees, with their hands raised to heaven, each silently praying to God, and saying, like Stephen, ‘ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ! ’

The scene that followed is too horrible to be described.

When all was over, and the clouds of sand that had been raised by the fierce struggle had subsided, the lions and tigers were seen besmeared with human blood, crouching and growling beside the remains of their victims !

The mangled bodies of the Christians lay on the sand, but their happy spirits were in glory. The Lord Jesus had taken them to be for ever with Himself, in the mansions prepared for those who love Him. They had suffered the cross, and received the crown !

- 'The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain :
His blood-red banner streams afar !
Who follows in His train ?
- 'Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears his cross below,
He follows in His train !
- 'The martyr first, whose eagle eye
Could pierce beyond the grave ;
Who saw his Master in the sky,
And called on Him to save.
- 'Like Him, with pardon on his tongue,
In midst of mortal pain,
He prayed for them that did the wrong !
Who follows in His train ?
- 'A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came ;
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and flame.
- 'They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane ;
They bowed their necks the death to feel !
Who follows in their train ?
- 'A noble army—men and boys,
The matron and the maid—
Around the Saviour's throne rejoice,
In robes of light arrayed.
- 'They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil, and pain !
O God ! to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.'

HEBER.

THE SERF.

'Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
Slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for—spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts;
The surest presage of the good they seek.'

COWPER.



CHAPTER I.

THE S'ERF'S HUT.

THE miserable dwelling in which the first scene of this narrative commences was a damp thatched hut or cabin, without glass windows; its walls were cracked; so that, altogether, it was not a building weather-proof against the wind and rain. In the interior of the habitation goats were lying on a bed of straw, which had not been changed for a very long while, and a lean cow was laboriously chewing what remained of some wiry-looking hay mixed with rushes.

The only furniture in the cabin consisted of a few stools and a roughly-planed table. A frame made of osier-twigs, supported by four wooden legs, and on which was plenty of clean straw, was the only bed in the dwelling.

A white-headed man was lying on it. His eyelids were closed ; but it was easy to see by his short breathing, and the slight quivering of his lips, that ill-health rather than sleep made him keep his bed. A youth about sixteen years of age was seated before the fire, and was engaged in replenishing it under a large iron pot. He then uncovered this pot, and was apparently enjoying the savoury smell which arose from it, when a girl about his own age, carrying a small osier-basket, entered the apartment.

‘Good morning, Jehan,’ said she in a low voice, looking towards the bed as though she feared to disturb the sick man.

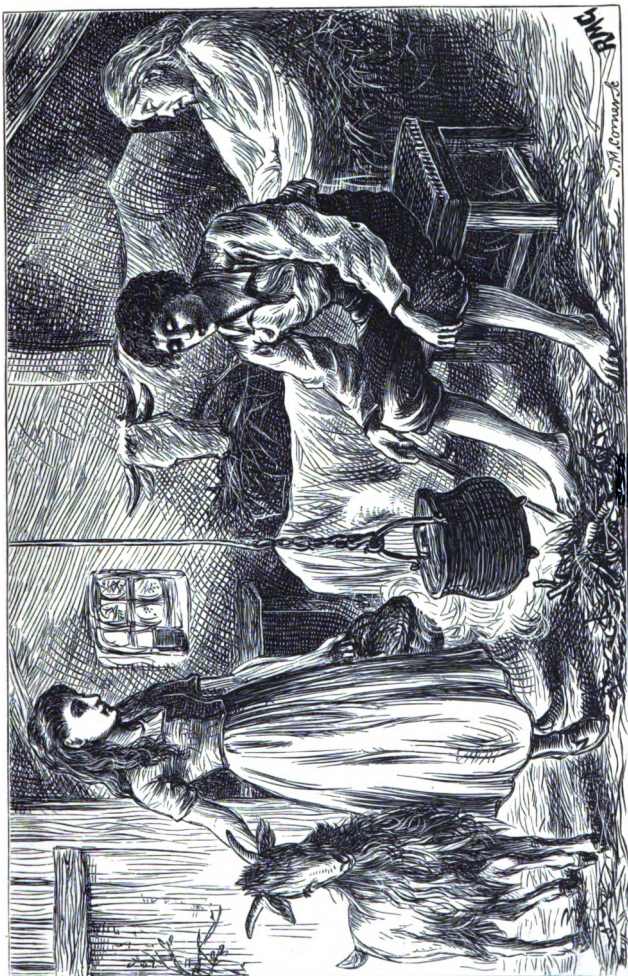
Jehan turned quickly round at the sound of this well-known voice, and a gleam of joy lighted up his features, which generally wore an expression of habitual discontent.

‘Good morning, Kate,’ replied he in a gentle tone, rising from his seat to welcome her.

‘How is your father?’ asked she.

Jehan shook his head.

‘Still very weak. This sickness has shaken



THE SERF. Page 128.

him very much, and he will require great care before his health be restored.'

'Here is something for him,' replied Kate, taking some butter out of her basket.

Jehan smiled.

'Thanks, my kind Kate, thanks,' said he. 'This will be a day of feasting for him, as I have already something here that will help him to regain his strength.'

'What is it?'

'Look for yourself.'

He uncovered the pot suspended over the fire. The girl bent forward and stirred the contents of the pot with a wooden spoon, to see what was in it.

'Fowl broth, thickened with oatmeal!' exclaimed she, quite surprised.

'The tax-gatherer gave me the fowl,' replied Jehan, 'as I have taught him how to keep his accounts in Latin.'

'Capital—very good!' said Kate, laughing. 'By taking something, if he can, from every one who enters the town,—a handful of flour, a hand-

ful of prunes,—Master James has become one of the wealthiest townsmen, and can pay as highly as any lord for the lessons that he receives. But does your father know what you are preparing for him ?’

‘He was asleep when I returned.’

‘Then let us get everything ready by the time he awakes. I have brought some nuts and cherries for him to eat after dinner.’

So saying, Kate emptied the contents of her osier-basket. Jehan then took out of a closet, porringers, or large basins, plates, spoons, and cups of wood ; and the youth and the girl proceeded to arrange them on the table.

The affection which seemed to unite these two young persons was the more remarkable on account of the striking contrast—and nature perhaps may have never made a greater—that existed between them. Kate was tall and well-made ; her handsome features had a pleasant expression, and her movements were light and graceful. At first sight nearly every one was prepossessed in her favour, and the winning smile

that played about her lips was almost resistless. Jehan, on the contrary, was short, broad, and clumsy in appearance. His cross-looking features were even made still more disagreeable instead of being improved by a head of hair of the family colour, that had gained them the nickname of Rufus, or red-haired. Jehan was the son of a serf; and as he had been from the time he could remember always crossed in his wishes and feelings, his whole appearance had an indescribable expression of constraint, sorrow, and ill-temper, which gave him a very repulsive look. It was only with his father and his cousin Kate that he seemed to lose this surliness. To them he was everything that was agreeable: the wolf became a lamb; his very ugliness was then almost changed into good looks.

In fact, the affection which Jehan had for these two persons was all in all to him. His father was the only member of his own family left alive except himself, and Kate was his only hope, as he was to marry her some day. The mother of the girl had promised that he should;

and nothing now remained but to ask the consent of the baron or lord, who was not accustomed to refuse such requests.

Meantime, the two young people had finished arranging the dinner things on the table, the fowl broth was ready, and the sick man moved at last. Kate uttered an exclamation of joy.

‘Oh, it is you, my dear girl!’ said the old man, raising himself with difficulty and leaning upon his elbow. ‘Why are you not out to-day as usual with the cows?’

‘The King is hunting in the forest, and the flocks and herds have not been driven out for fear of the hounds,’ replied the young peasant girl.

‘The King!’ replied the old serf; ‘and you never went to look at him as he was passing, Jehan!’

‘You had need of me, father,’ replied the son.

‘He has not been losing his time,’ continued Kate. ‘Look here!’

Old Thomas Rufus turned his head round to look.

‘What! The table all ready for dinner!’ exclaimed he, astonished.

‘You are going to have some fowl broth, thickened with oatmeal,’ said Kate.

‘And butter,’ said Jehan.

‘And cherries,’ added the old man, who was now sitting up in bed.

‘It is a dinner just fit for a sick man,’ exclaimed Kate, clapping her hands joyfully. ‘Come and sit here beside Jehan, and I will serve you both.’

She went to the fireplace, and lifting the pot, she poured its contents into a wooden bowl on the table. Thomas had thrown aside the goat-skins that covered him, and was following,—with the eager look and smile of an invalid recovering from sickness,—all the preparations going on. He was about to rise and go to the table, when a loud noise was heard outside. Jehan ran to the door, which was violently opened before he had time to bar it. Half a dozen huntsmen, with the arms of the King embroidered on the breasts of their coats, entered the apartment.

All came in noisily, asking for the house of the forester; but at the sight of the dinner-table and the smoking wooden bowl, the savoury smell from which filled the hut, they uttered exclamations of satisfaction.

‘The very thing!’ exclaimed the oldest man of the party, throwing down the whip which he held in his hand. ‘We need not trouble ourselves any more about finding the forester’s house. There is enough here to fill our hungry mouths for the present.’

‘Why, it is a mess of hot broth, with a fine fowl in it,’ said a dark man with a famished aspect, and whose nostrils appeared to enjoy the savoury smell of the dinner, for they dilated to enjoy it more fully. ‘I bespeak the right wing.’

‘And I the left wing!’ exclaimed loudly a fair man, who had already taken possession of the best stool.

‘I claim the legs,’ said the oldest man.

‘I the breast and body,’ added a fourth man.

‘Not so fast,’ interrupted Jehan, whose countenance had already resumed its harsh and ill-

tempered expression. 'We three here wish our equal share also.'

'There is not too much of it for ourselves,' observed the dark man, who had drawn his knife.

'That is very likely,' replied Jehan; 'but it is usual for those to whom victuals belong, to eat some of their own food if they wish for it.'

'You forget that we are in the King's service and in his retinue,' replied the oldest huntsman; 'and have the right and privilege to take the plate or dish out of your hand, and the cup from you, even although you were in the act of raising it to your lips, and even to make you get out of the bed you are sleeping in.'

'Is it possible?' exclaimed Jehan.

'Alas, yes!' muttered Thomas, with a sigh. 'It is the King's prerogative, or prescriptive right as they call it, to be supplied with necessities during a journey.'

'And you cannot even share the dinner that I have got for you, father?' replied the youth.

'Except he has the privilege granted him

empowering him to keep his share,' answered the fair man.

'I have only the privilege of having what you please to give me,' said Thomas, with the humble submission of one who had long been accustomed to suffer harsh treatment and injustice.

'What we please to give you!' said the huntsman who had last spoken. 'There must be much more of it before we shall have any to spare. Why, there is but a mouthful.'

'My father is just recovering from a dangerous attack of illness,' pleaded Jehan impatiently.

'A less dangerous attack, I fancy, than that of hunger,' returned the man, with a coarse laugh.

'You will, I am sure, be so kind as to make room for my poor old sick father at the end of the table,' urged Jehan.

'The table is too small,' replied the dark man brutally.

'Why, this fowl did not live alone, I daresay,' added the fair man. 'Your father can easily pop another of the lot into the pot and dine like a prince.'

Jehan clenched his hands, and his eyes flashed ; but Kate laid her hand upon his shoulder.

‘ These King’s men are masters everywhere,’ said she in a whisper. ‘ Do not forget yourself.’

Jehan bent his head, with a stifled sigh.

As for Thomas Rufus, he bore this disappointment with the patient silence of one who was used to such things. Nevertheless it was easy to perceive that the loss of the savoury meal, which he had reckoned upon having but a few minutes before, was exceedingly felt by him. His eyes watched every movement of the King’s men with a mingled look of grief, vexation, fear, and longing ; his lips opened and shut mechanically, as though he were actually partaking of some of the food. Twice he even slyly stooped down, when he thought that he was not observed, and took up some of the half-picked bones which the men had thrown upon the floor. Jehan, who saw him, could not restrain his feelings : his eyes were filled with tears, and he hurriedly left the hut.

He did not return for some time, when he entered carrying on his shoulder a bundle of

brushwood, which he threw down in one of the corners of the apartment. The King's huntsmen had gone, and Kate had put everything back into its place; she was even on the point of taking leave of Thomas, as night was coming on. Jehan proposed to see her home a part of the way. She consented; and just as they got outside the door another party of men came up.

This time it was men sent by Count Ralph de Mailié; and they came to execute the orders of their feudal lord the Count. Master Moreau, the Count's steward, was at their head, holding in his hand a silver-headed black stick.

'Where is Thomas Rufus?' asked he of the youth, who had uncovered his head as soon as he saw him.

'Here,' replied Jehan.

'Why has he not been at his work during this month?' inquired the steward.

'Because he has been ill in bed with a fever.'

'I know it,' returned the steward; 'but you ought to have taken his place and done his work for him. I ordered you to do so.'

‘I told you at the time that it was impossible for me to do so,’ answered Jehan.

‘How so?’

‘Because I was obliged to stay at home to attend to my father when he was so very ill.’

The steward became red with anger.

‘Very well,’ said he; ‘you have stayed away in order to show your contempt for my authority: you wish to prove that you can set my orders at defiance——’

‘Not for one moment,’ interrupted Jehan.

‘We shall see who will get the best of it,’ continued the steward, rapping the ground with his stick. ‘You take upon yourself to disobey the orders of my lord the Count.’

‘I do not think of disobeying them,’ said the youth.

‘You refuse to obey what I order.’

‘But consider——’

‘No, I will not hear a word more. The forester was quite right when he said that you are a worthless fellow, and that nothing can be done with you; but the interests of my lord must not

be injured by the obstinacy of his serfs. You must pay a fine for every day that you have not worked.'

Jehan shrugged his shoulders.

'All the bailiffs in the country could not get any money out of us,' said he bitterly.

'I shall be sharper than the bailiffs. I shall be able to get some,' exclaimed the steward.

'Search this pocket, Master Moreau,' said the youth, half opening the leather purse suspended from his waist.

'No; but I will search your hut,' said the steward.

'You will find but misery and sickness inside it.'

'I shall find also a lean cow in it,' said the steward, making a sign to one of his men to seize the cow.

Jehan started.

'What are you doing?' exclaimed he.

'Only feeling in your pocket, according to your request,' replied Moreau ironically.

'You surely will not be so cruel as to take our cow?'

‘Why not?’

‘Because, master, some persons have cut and stolen our rye, the wolves have devoured most of our goats, and this cow is nearly the only thing of any value left to us. If you take it from us, my father and I will be left almost without anything for our support.’

‘For shame!’ said the steward. ‘A learned man like you should always be able to get on in the world. Did you not say the other day to the tax-gatherer that I keep my accounts in bad Latin?’

‘Is it forbidden to say what is true?’

‘Even if it be true, which it is not,’ answered the steward, ‘I shall none the less write in Latin amongst the list of confiscations, “*Item vacca Thomasii cognomine Rubri.*”’ Then, turning to his men, he added sharply, ‘Take away that cow.’

They tried to obey, but Jehan held the animal by one of its horns.

‘I cannot suffer this, Master Moreau,’ said he in a voice in which anger and emotion were so

blended as to make it falter. 'The value of the work for the days that my father and I have been absent, does not amount to the value of this cow. I will speak to the Count himself. He shall know how you take vengeance on poor people for your ignorance of good Latin.'

'My ignorance of good Latin!' exclaimed the steward, exasperated.

'I have proof of it in your last receipts,' replied Jehan, with cutting irony.

'It is untrue,' returned the steward, whose pretension to know pure Latin was a weak point in his character.

'Shall I show the receipts to the chaplain?'

'Mentoris impudenter.'

'You ought to have said *mentiris*, master,' observed Jehan quietly.

The steward turned red, and his men glanced at each other with a smile.

'What shall we come to next, when a country clown like you takes upon himself to lecture and teach his betters?' exclaimed Moreau. 'The old priest *would* be so foolish as to teach you book-

learning; but I tell you what, young Jehan, a serf ought to know no more than how to dig the earth and follow the plough. But enough of all this: take away this cow with you, men.'

'My lord the Count must order it to be done first,' added Jehan, still clinging to the cow.

'Let go that horn, you impudent fellow.'

'When you promise not to take away our cow.'

The steward raised his black stick and dealt a blow with it full on the bare head of Jehan, who did not give Moreau time to deal him a second blow, as he sprang upon him, seized him by the throat—uttering a kind of ferocious howl as he did so—and threw him on the ground at his feet. Luckily for the steward, his men interfered to protect him. They forced Jehan, though not without some difficulty, to let go his grasp, and the steward was raised from the ground.

He was so much stunned by Jehan's rough treatment that he did not seem to know where he was, but no sooner did he fully recover his senses than all his fury returned.

‘Seize the assassin!’ exclaimed he, pointing to Jehan. ‘He has murderously assaulted an officer of my lord the Count, and he will be tried, sentenced, and hanged! You will be answerable to me for his safe custody.’

The men seized hold of the young serf, who vainly tried to resist: they tied his hands behind his back, and the handle of a whip was fastened across his mouth to serve as a gag.

‘Away with him to the castle prison!’ continued Master Moreau. ‘My lord will arrive to-morrow, and will decide what shall be done in this case. Ah! the wretch!—to resist as he has done my authority as steward of this castle—to think that he knows Latin better than I do, and that he dares to lift his hand against me his master! Well, we shall see what all this will lead to!’

Then turning towards old Thomas Rufus and Kate, who were beseeching him to have mercy, he added:

‘Silence! hold your tongues, I tell you. There is no pardon for such crimes. Hanging is too good for him.’



CHAPTER II.

THE SERF IMPRISONED.

IT may be easily imagined that Thomas Rufus and Kate were greatly alarmed for the life of Jehan when they saw him dragged away to prison.

‘The serfs or slaves of the feudal nobles,’ observes an author, ‘appear to have been in nearly as wretched a condition as any which have attracted notice in later ages. Their masters had absolute dominion over their persons, and the power of punishing them capitally, without the intervention of any judge. The nobles possessed this dangerous right, not only in the earlier periods, when their manners were fierce, but continued to exercise it so late as the twelfth century ; and even after this jurisdiction of masters came

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to be restrained, the life of a serf was deemed to be of so little value, that only a very slight payment was made for having taken it away. In every case the punishment inflicted was very much more severe than that suffered by a free-man for a similar crime.'

Thomas and Kate being aware of all this, were the more alarmed when they reflected that Count Ralph was known to be a very passionate man, who passed sentences of punishment upon his serfs without listening patiently to what they had to say in their own defence, and also that he very seldom altered the sentence after he had once passed it. It was to be feared that Master Moreau, the steward, would take advantage of the severity of Count Ralph's character in this respect to cause the death of Jehan, as his cunning was fully equal to his wickedness.

Kate hastened to the tax-gatherer to beseech him to interfere in favour of her cousin; but he refused to have anything to do with an affair which might injure him without the chance of gaining anything for himself. In fact he was the

Count's own tax-gatherer. He was frightened to interfere on behalf of Jehan, as he was the servant of the Count more than that of the King. The Count might consider that one servant interfering between him and another servant, or, rather, worse still, a serf, was a piece of presumption that ought to be punished in some way. The case was the same with the Provost, who also feared that Master Moreau, the steward, would refuse any longer to permit the Provost's horse to graze in the Count's fields. The lawyer likewise thought it prudent to decline to assist Kate and Jehan, as the steward might in return get the legal business of the Count taken away and given to another ; for under the feudal system every powerful noble had a court of justice of his own, and looked with jealousy and dislike upon the royal courts of justice.

The King and the members of his government were for ages not powerful enough to overturn the system of the barons' courts by violent means ; and various quiet means were used to diminish the extent and importance of these courts.

Kate was on her way back to inform Thomas of the failure of her efforts to save Jehan. She was passing by some corn-fields—her heart filled with sorrow, and her eyes red with weeping—when she perceived a Franciscan monk, who was going the same way.

He was an old man, and his countenance had an open and benevolent expression. He carried a long staff in his hand; a cape covered his shoulders, and a cord was tied round his waist, to which was fastened a small loaf of brown bread and a gourd.

‘Good morning, my child,’ said the monk. ‘How is it that you are not at work?’

‘I have been to the Provost, holy father,’ replied Kate in a sorrowful voice.

‘To the Provost! Have you done anything that will bring you under the power of the law?’

‘No, not I myself; but my cousin Jehan has.’

‘What has he done?’

Kate told him what had taken place the day before, and that Jehan was now in the prison of the castle.

‘God help and save him!’ said Father Ambrose, for such was the name of the Franciscan monk. ‘It is but an hour ago since I saw Count Ralph with his followers pass along at a furious pace. One of his squires was saying in the village that the Count had been unsaddled three times during the tournament at Angers, and that his smothered rage was dreadful on account of these defeats.’

‘What will become of us, then, holy father!’ exclaimed Kate. ‘The steward is certain to take advantage of the ill-humour of the Count to set him against Jehan, and perhaps get the judge to order Jehan to be hanged.’

‘We must hope that the Count will have mercy,’ said the monk, in a tone that showed he had very little hope.

‘Oh no, no, it is in vain to hope,’ replied the girl, clasping her hands and bursting into tears. ‘The Count never shows any mercy when he is angry. When he is in one of these dreadful humours, he wreaks his vengeance on the first person that falls into his power. There is no longer any hope for my poor Jehan. What will

become of his old father! What will become of both of us without him! Ah! if you only knew him, reverend father. He is as savage as a wild boar to those who insult and injure him, and as quiet and gentle as a lamb to those whom he loves or who treat him well. . . . It is dreadful to think that no person dare speak the truth to defend and save him! The tax-gatherer, the provost, the lawyer, all refuse. It is only his old father and I who will openly say that the steward is in the wrong—that he first ill-used and struck Jehan; but nobody listens to what poor serfs say, and Jehan will be hanged without our being able to do anything to save him, although I would give my own life to do so.'

Whilst speaking thus, the girl sobbed and pressed her clasped hands against her breast. The feelings of the monk were touched.

'Show me the shortest way to the castle, for you know the paths better than I,' said he. 'I will speak to the Count, and see if I cannot get him to have mercy upon Jehan.'

‘Can it be true, reverend father, that you will?’ said Kate, with an exclamation of joy.

‘Is it not a duty to succour those who are desolate and oppressed?’ replied the Franciscan.

‘And dare you venture to speak about such matters to Count Ralph?’

The monk smiled at her ignorance.

The Church at this period linked itself with every class of society. The bishops were the companions of princes; the priests claimed reverence in the baronial hall; the preaching friars and monks brought consolation to the cottage of the suffering peasant—thus everywhere presenting a striking contrast between the liberality of the Church and the haughty pride of the feudal nobles. The Church scarcely acknowledged any aristocracy except that of talent: once received into holy orders, the serf lost all traces of his bondage. He was not merely raised to an equality with his former lord, but he might aspire to dignities which cast those of temporal princes into the shade. This method of obtaining liberty by entering into holy orders, or

taking the vow in a nunnery, was permitted to male and female serfs for some time ; but so many serfs escaped by this means out of the power of their masters, that the practice was afterwards limited, and at last forbidden. Nevertheless, the Church, corrupt as was its state at this time, was very much beloved by the suffering people, and was an object of jealousy, not unmixed with hatred, to many of the feudal tyrants. The power of the Church and its priests was daily increasing, as its benefits in checking the oppression of the people became more felt. Therefore the Franciscan monk might well smile at the ignorance of Kate when she asked him if he durst venture to speak about such an affair as that of Jehan to Count Ralph.

‘The Count is but a man, and we all venture to address God Himself,’ said he. ‘Show me the shortest way to the castle, as we have no time to lose. Let us make as much haste as we can. The course of law is sometimes very quick at these castles, and we may arrive too late to be of any use to Jehan.’

These words made Kate shudder, and she immediately led the way to the castle, followed by the monk, who had some difficulty in keeping pace with her, so eager was she to get there.

It was not long before the battlements of the castle appeared in sight. The girl looked with terror at the gallows ; and when she saw swinging from it the skeletons of two men who had been hanged some time before, she slackened her pace so as not to hurry the old monk, who was beginning to pant at this unusual speed.

The castle of Rillé had been recently built, and the master-mason who had superintended its construction had neglected nothing to make it as strong as the art of defensive fortification, as known then, would permit. It had three walls, protected by towers, loop-holes, sally-ports, each wall being surrounded by rows of stakes or a stockade, and a drawbridge. In the middle of the third enclosure was the donjon, or great tower of the castle ; the whole of which was surrounded by a deep ditch or moat, with a drawbridge, which was kept raised.

It was in the great tower, the citadel of the building, that were kept the family deeds and documents, the weapons, armour, and treasure; in the court around it were the cisterns, wells, stables, cellars, and the rooms inhabited by the Count. Underneath were the underground passages, the entrance to which was known to the Count only. They extended as far as the forest at some distance outside the walls; and by means of these passages underneath the earth those inside the castle could escape unperceived in any case of necessity during a siege, provided the enemy was not acquainted with the secret.

Kate having accompanied Father Ambrose as far as the drawbridge, besought him to leave nothing undone to save Jehan, and then seated herself on a spot near the castle, to wait for his return.

The monk was conducted into the principal quadrangle of the castle, in which some squires and pages were engaged in practising the use of their weapons; he was then shown into one of the rooms used by the Count.

The luxury that reigned within the building was in harmony with its magnificent massive exterior. The floor was formed of stones of various colours, the lead and iron which joined them together forming an immense number of shining arabesques. The beams were inlaid with metal, and the walls decorated with armour and weapons. The painted glass in the windows represented scenes in the history of the family of the Count.

The beautifully carved furniture was made of oak, and was black with age. The walls were covered with tapestry-hangings. Around the apartment were seats on which were red cushions as well as couches on which to sit or recline. Here and there, as a mark of wealth, were hung mirrors of glass or of polished metal.

Father Ambrose, as he glanced round the room, admired a clock of which the hands marked the hour and minutes—an instrument for measuring time which was not then, as now, to be found in every well-furnished house.

It was not long before he was ushered into the dining-hall, in which was Count Ralph, a

fierce-looking man—the very picture of a feudal lord, who felt the prodigious importance of the possession of a fief such as his was, and the power and influence it gave him over the persons around him.

The dining-hall in which the monk found himself was a long apartment, the roof of which was supported by pillars of oak inlaid with metal. A table occupied nearly all the length of the room. At one end was the side-board, with rows of shelves containing jugs and cups of silver; and here also were tables on which were placed dishes containing meats cooked with various herbs, small loaves of bread, and flagons of wine.

At the other end of the hall was a band of musicians playing a symphony, in which the trumpet, the flute, flageolet, the lute, and the rebec were heard.

Those seated at the great table, in number about a hundred, were placed according to their respective ranks. Some of the first in importance had silver-gilt porringers or bowls, and also



forks, which at that time were beginning to get into use ; the next in rank had silver porringers ; and those of still lower degree had porringers of pewter.

Nobody at first took any notice of Father Ambrose. The servant who showed him into the hall merely pointed to a place, where the monk seated himself.

The monk was about to partake of some refreshment, when the Count perceived him.

What ! have we a monk's frock and cowl among us ?' exclaimed he, putting down his silver drinking-cup, which he had just emptied. 'Come and sit at my table,' said he, addressing the monk. 'Make room there for the worthy father.'

Those seated near the Count hastened to make a vacant place at the table ; and Father Ambrose was soon seated close to the Count.

'If I am not mistaken, you belong to the Franciscans at Tours,' said the nobleman.

'I am the Superior of the monastery there.'

The Count's look became less overbearing.

'I am glad of it,' replied he in a gentler voice,

and in a less rude manner. 'I have always liked your order; and I was even going to your house on a matter I wish to consult you about. Do you not grant laymen the permission to wear the dress of your order for one day out of each month?'

'We do, my lord.'

'And any one who is permitted to wear the dress, has at the same time all the privileges and indulgences that you yourselves possess?'

'Provided that the person clothes himself with the same spirit of charity and humility, as well as clothing himself with the mere dress,' answered Father Ambrose. 'The dress of a monk worn by a man of the world ought to remind him of the objects which real monks have in view—the salvation of their souls, and the piety which ought to reign in the cloister.'

'I know,' answered the Count; 'but I want you to grant me this favour, on condition that, in return, you can ask any favour of me for the benefit of your monastery.'

'May I ask one favour now for myself?' said Father Ambrose.

‘What favour, reverend father?’

‘Your steward imprisoned the son of one of your serfs yesterday?’

‘He did speak to me about a young knave who had refused to obey.’

‘I have promised to ask a pardon from you for this young man.’

‘A pardon for Jehan!’ exclaimed the steward, Master Moreau. ‘Do not grant anything of the sort, my lord. Your serfs are becoming more difficult to manage every day. You yourself have said that it is necessary to make an example of him.’

‘True,’ replied the Count; ‘but I did not know at the time that the holy father took so great an interest in the fellow.’

‘My lord knows that every day when he repeats the Paternoster, as I trust he does,’ said the monk, ‘he says these words: “*Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*” (Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us). The word of God commands us to show mercy, if we hope to receive mercy from God. He says, “The merciful

man doeth good to his own soul."* "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion."† "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."‡

The Count looked undecided. He did not wish to displease the Church.

The steward saw that his master was inclined to yield to the request of the monk. He feared that he would lose his vengeance.

'My lord should not forget,' said he, 'that Jehan has already been fined for various acts of insolence unbecoming a serf; and if all the other people on your land were to follow his example, my lord would have no labour done, and no taxes paid. I am sure that if all your people were as violent and vicious as he is, we might all be murdered when we least expect it; a general rising of the serfs would take place. He tried to strangle me yesterday; and but for our men with me, would have succeeded. I was senseless, his fingers were so tight on my throat.'

'The wretch!' exclaimed the Count.

* Prov. xi. 17.

† Zech. vii. 9.

‡ Matt. v. 7.

‘Besides which,’ continued the steward, ‘I have suspicions that old Rufus and this son of his are somehow connected with the deer that have been killed or stolen, no one knows how.’

‘Is this true?’ asked the Count. ‘If no one knows how, who can say that old Rufus and Jehan had anything to do with these acts?’

‘The cabin of these people is on the edge of the forest where the deer are; so it is no wonder the young fellow will not work,—for this last month he has refused to do anything, because he can get food so easily by killing the game in the forest. Only yesterday I heard that some of the King’s huntsmen were feasting in the hut of Rufus. The King, we know, is not very well disposed towards my lord; and if Rufus and this Jehan have been saying anything by which the King can find some fresh reason to do away with my lord’s court of justice and right to raise taxes, why ——’

‘You think, then, these knaves are plotting against me!’ said the Count, dashing his fist upon the table. ‘The King will find that I am

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lord of this fief, and that I am little disposed to yield up my rightful judicial power to the Parliament of Paris, or any other Parliaments in different parts of France. I know that it is the King's pleasure to exclude as much as possible all nobles from honours, emoluments, and privileges, and compel them either to attend the royal court as mere powerless shadows of what they have once been, or to remain secluded and unnoticed in their castles.'

'My lord,' said the monk, 'recollect that you are speaking of the King, who might not be pleased if he were to hear of your words.'

'He would not be pleased if he were to hear what all the nobles say. If he were to punish us for speaking thus, he would have to punish nearly all the nobility of France,' answered the Count. 'Besides, he has nothing to fear from us as a class. The nobles may be roused to exasperation by all this; but they will never agree to any plan of combined resistance, as there are too many quarrels and differences between feudal families in this country. Not that the King

shows us any mercy when any of us fall into his power. The kings have for some time been striving to reduce us to the level of other subjects, by stripping us of our exclusive privileges, one by one. Whenever any of the nobles can be brought under the power of the law in the slightest degree, he is treated with all possible severity and ignominy, in order that the people, by seeing the nobles reduced to such an abject state, may be indifferent to them and despise them, and may transfer all their reverence to the King alone.'

'The King's men had been in the cabin of Jehan just before he seized me by the throat and nearly strangled me. That is where he learned the lesson so fast of setting your authority altogether at defiance,' said the steward, with a gleam of hate in his eyes.

'Say you so?' said the Count in a loud voice, and dashing his clenched hand upon the table. 'Then I will show the young knave that I am lord of this fief, that he is my serf, that I am his master, and that the King is ——'

He paused, as if fearful of saying what he thought, then added quietly—‘the King of France. As for this Jehan, I will have him hanged at once.’

‘But, my lord,’ pleaded the monk, ‘we live no longer in the early feudal times, when masters had the power of punishing serfs with death, without a trial before any judge. I am sure that so great and honourable a nobleman as you are will scorn to do anything illegal.’

‘Of course, good father,’ replied the Count hastily; ‘though, if I were to put the knave to death this minute, the life of a serf is of so little value, that only a small fine would have to be paid by me, even if I were summoned to answer for it before any judge. However, as you seem particularly anxious to have matters conducted according to all the due forms of law, I will have this Jehan brought before the court; and I think that, as the judge in that court is a particular friend of mine, he will not allow my steward to be nearly strangled with impunity, and will, at my request, sentence that

knave Jehan to be hanged. The two fellows whose skeletons are swinging on the gallows outside, were ordered to be hanged by the judge, for stealing. Jehan has done worse,—he nearly murdered my steward because he was asked to do his work. Say no more, good father ; I will not listen to another word in his favour. I will have him brought before the court, and, if possible, hanged.'

'Then his fate is as good as sealed, my lord. I know from the character of the judge, that he will order him to be executed if you press the charge against him. You will, I trust, let me see this wretched youth, that I may prepare him to meet death in a proper state of mind.'

'You can see him whenever you please,' answered the Count. 'Here!' shouted he to a man-at-arms, 'show the reverend father the way to the prison whenever he wishes to go there.'

'I will go now,' said the monk, rising at once.

Politely, yet gravely, taking leave of the Count,

who in return expressed his intention of soon visiting the monastery at Tours,—of which Father Ambrose was the Superior,—the monk followed the man-at-arms to the prison in which Jehan was confined.





CHAPTER III.

THE MONK'S INTERCESSION.

THE man led the monk to the principal tower of the castle. When they arrived at the lowest floor in the building, the man fastened a rope round the body of Father Ambrose, and put a lighted lantern into his hand; he then, by means of a ring fixed in a large flat stone, raised it from the pavement, and lowered the monk down into the dark, damp dungeon in which Jehan was confined. Father Ambrose found Jehan in deep despair crouching in a corner.

‘My lord has returned then?’ said he.

‘He has,’ replied the monk; ‘and it is with his permission that I am here to have some conversation with you.’

‘To prepare me for death, holy father.’

The monk silently bent his head, as a sign that it was so.

‘The will of God be done,’ replied Jehan, with a sigh; ‘and the more so, as I feel that I could not continue to lead a life of serfdom, or rather slavery. There is something in me that rises against oppression, persecution, and injustice. I am ready and willing to listen to your instructions, reverend father.’

‘Repent of your sins,’ answered the monk, ‘and especially of what you have done to bring you here. It is said that you nearly strangled your master’s steward.’

‘I do repent,’ answered Jehan, kneeling. ‘Listen to what happened, and to the history of my unfortunate life.’

The monk seated himself on the floor of the dungeon, and Jehan began a long story of his past life, in which he confessed his anger, hatred, and desire for vengeance, on account of his wrongs as a serf.

Amidst all the hard and dreary lot of a serf

he had nourished one hope,—that of freedom. The feelings of Father Ambrose were touched by this account of the persevering struggles which the youth had persistently made, choosing rather to resist and suffer, than submit silently to a state of hopeless servitude, made doubly bitter by the tyranny of the steward. After Jehan had finished, the monk began to speak seriously about the state of Jehan's soul, and to give him such consolation as was suitable to his situation.

We shall pass over what he said, finding a reason for great thankfulness that we now live in better times, in which, by God's blessing, the word of the Lord, and the gospel of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, are much more widely known than in those days of darkness.

After the monk had finished, Jehan said, returning to the subject of his own affairs:

‘When you quit me, reverend father, go, I beseech you, to my father and Kate, and prepare them for the dreadful blow which my death will be to them. Above all, do not tell them that I regret the loss of life,—I ought not; but ex-

plain to them that I was accustomed to my hardships, and that I almost forgot them at times when I saw Kate and my father happy. Alas! who will look after and care for them now?’

‘God,’ said the monk solemnly. ‘Christ did not die in vain for the sins of the world. “*Venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego refeciam vos,*” are the words of the Saviour. I will translate them for you into French, as you do not understand our Latin Testament.’

‘There is no need,’ replied Jehan. ‘I will repeat the translation to you: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”’

Father Ambrose looked surprised.

‘You know Latin!’ said he.

‘It has caused my ruin,’ answered Jehan.

He then related how he had brought upon himself the hatred of Master Moreau, by imprudently talking about the steward’s bad Latin. The monk shook his head in a significant manner.

‘Do you not know, that in these days of

feudal power,' answered he, 'it is dangerous for the serf to find fault with the sayings and doings of his superiors?'

'So I have found to my cost, when it is too late,' replied Jehan. 'Nevertheless, I suspect Master Moreau to have acted in this manner to me as much from fear as from spite.'

'How so?'

'He fears that I have it in my power to expose his robberies to my lord the Count.'

'Be careful as to what you say,' answered Father Ambrose. 'No one ought to make a charge against the character of another, without sufficient proof.'

'I not only think what I say, reverend father, but I am sure of it, having proofs.'

'Can it be possible?'

'I have seen Master Moreau collecting my lord's taxes paid in kind. On these occasions he goes out with a cart and a tally-board, on which he has to mark what he receives; the person who pays has another tally-board, on which is marked what he pays. So, if Moreau's

tally-board were examined and compared with all the other tally-boards, the difference in the accounts—which would not agree—would prove his tricks. If he received three things from my lord's people, he seldom marked down more than two ; and if he received six fowls, he generally forgot to reckon one of them.'

'But the taxes in money?'

'I have seen the rolls of parchment on which the accounts of the fief are kept. They are very numerous, as this fief is one of the largest in this part of France. As I can read Latin and French, I have discovered that he has often written a less sum than the one he had received.'

'Jehan, Jehan, be sure of what you are saying!'

'What I say can be easily proved, as I have just said. It is only necessary to compare the steward's accounts with the accounts of all those persons who have paid the steward anything.'

'Then you are sure that Master Moreau is deceiving and robbing the Count?'

'As sure as I am that I shall one day stand before the judgment-seat of Christ!'

'Enough,' replied the monk; to whom the statements of the young serf seemed to have given some unexpected hope. 'I must now leave you, but I hope to meet you soon again.'

'At the foot of the gallows, holy father.'

'Where and whensoever it may please God,' answered Father Ambrose. 'Pray without ceasing, and put your trust in Christ. I do not bid you hope to escape the danger which threatens you; but I remind you that all things are possible with God. Adieu!'

He pulled the cord which was fastened to him, the other end of which was held by the man-at-arms. After he was pulled up, he asked one of the servants to lead him to the steward.

When they entered the steward's room, they found him talking to a servant. He glanced at the monk, as though he were not at all pleased at the visit, and asked him what he wanted.

'I wish to have some conversation with you, Master Moreau,' answered Father Ambrose coolly.

'Excuse me,' replied the steward, 'but I am very busy just now.'

‘I shall not occupy your time for more than a few minutes.’

‘What is it, then, reverend father?’

Father Ambrose looked at the servant, who made a movement as though he were going to leave the room.

‘You can stay,’ said Moreau; ‘I suppose there is no secret in what Father Ambrose is going to tell me?’

‘Oh no, if you do not wish it,’ replied the monk. ‘It is a matter concerning the Count’s affairs.’

‘Then why come to me about it?’

‘Because it is a matter in your department.’

‘What is it, then?’

‘About gathering the taxes.’

‘Oh, indeed!’ exclaimed Moreau, becoming suddenly more attentive.

‘Jehan has told me something about ——’

‘You can leave the room, Roussel,’ interrupted the steward, quickly turning to the servant. ‘And what did Jehan tell you?’ continued he, as soon as the servant had quitted the apartment.

‘He said that he could increase the Count’s revenue fully one-third.’

‘How? By increasing the taxes?’

‘No; by putting a stop to some robberies and embezzlements.’

The steward started. ‘What do you mean by saying so?’ stammered he.

‘I mean,’ said the monk, ‘nothing more than that Jehan has a knowledge of the affair. He has, he says, proofs.’

‘Proofs!’ exclaimed the steward, turning very pale.

‘I have made him a promise to inform the Count, who I daresay will inquire into the business and find out the truth.’

Moreau looked terrified.

‘However,’ continued Father Ambrose, ‘I thought it proper to inform you of it first, as the matter is connected with your department.’

‘Thanks,’ returned the steward in an agitated tone of voice,—‘many thanks, reverend father. Jehan must deceive you; he cannot have any proofs.’

‘Well, the Count will see to that.’

‘It is useless to trouble him about it,’ replied Moreau quickly,—‘perfectly useless.’

‘Perhaps so; but as I have promised Jehan ——’

‘Jehan!’ interrupted the steward. ‘Of course Jehan will say anything to gain time, Jehan indeed!’

‘Who knows that his information may not be so valuable that the Count may pardon him?’

‘Is it his pardon that you are seeking to obtain, reverend father? If so, I will undertake to get it.’

‘You?’

‘Yes, upon reflection, I really think that, after all, I may have been a little hasty in this affair, and that one ought to overlook a good many faults in the young; and Jehan is very young—quite a youth. In fact I intended, before I even saw you, to try and see if I could not get my lord the Count to deal mercifully with the unfortunate youth.’

‘Had you not better do so at once?’ said the monk, with a significant look, as he now no longer

had the slightest doubt of the steward's guilt, and felt that the man was in his power. 'I will await your return here.'

'Very well,' answered Moreau, rising from his seat; 'I will go at once and try to obtain the pardon.'

'Do not neglect to do your utmost to succeed, because, if the Count were to refuse you, it would be my painful duty to ——'

'Say no more, reverend father,' interrupted Moreau, 'you will not have to do any painful duty of the kind. The Count is in want of money at this moment, and I alone can get it for him as rapidly and as secretly as he requires. At such times as these I generally get any request I make. Of course I do all this with the understanding that you do not say a word to any one of what Jehan has told you. I will now go and get this pardon.'

Master Moreau left the room, leaving Father Ambrose astonished at the sudden change which had taken place in the steward, who remained absent about an hour, when he returned with a

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flushed face, and the drops of perspiration were standing on his brow.

‘The Count has forgiven Jehan,’ said he ; ‘nevertheless, I had great difficulty in persuading my lord to overlook Jehan’s conduct. He seemed to think that an example ought to be made of him, and that not bringing him before the court to be tried and judged will have a bad and dangerous effect upon the other people doing the Count’s work ; therefore the Count only pardons on the condition that Jehan shall be sent out of this part of the country.’

‘Whither does the Count intend to send him ?’ asked Father Ambrose.

‘To one of his former serfs lately made free, and now a citizen of Tours : Master Laurent is his name.’

‘The clothier and draper ?’

‘The very man. The Count promised to give him a shop-boy from among the sons of the serfs, and I do not think that any other of them would be more suitable than Jehan, who can read and write.’

‘And knows sufficient arithmetic to be able to tell whether accounts are properly kept, and whether there is anything wrong in them,’ said the monk in a significant manner. ‘The Count is right. It is far better for all parties concerned that Jehan should leave this place ; besides which, I see no other objection to such a plan. By being with Master Laurent now, he may hereafter gain his freedom, and also follow some trade. I will return to the dungeon and inform Jehan of this good news.’

‘He has been already informed of it,’ replied Moreau ; ‘and he is by this time waiting to see you near the drawbridge, as the sooner he leaves the castle the better.’

‘I will go to him, then,’ answered Father Ambrose. ‘You will thank the Count, in my name, for the mercy he has shown. As for you, Master Moreau, permit a poor monk, speaking by the authority of God’s word, to counsel you to have more brotherly and Christian love even for the humblest serf, remembering that Christ

died to save sinners among the lowly as well as among the great. Also allow me to advise you, as it is God who commands you, to be "a faithful steward," lest evil befall you in this world and in the world to come.'





CHAPTER IV.

JEHAN GOES TO TOURS.

JEHAN did not quit his father and Kate without feeling it very acutely ; nevertheless, the hope of getting on in the world, so as to be able at some time or other to gain his freedom, went far to sweeten the bitterness of the separation.

Cheered by this hope, he courageously bade them farewell, and began his journey to the city of Tours.

Until now, he had never left the neighbourhood of the place in which he was born, and almost everything that he saw as he travelled along the road was new to him ; but when he approached the suburbs of the city his astonishment increased, especially at the sight of a long procession of

children. Jehan was told by a man of whom he asked the question, that they were school-children out for a holiday with their masters on St. Nicolas' day. A little farther on he saw two madmen, whose wild language and gestures, as also their shaven heads, proclaimed what they were—fastened with chains, like dogs, before the door of the house of a doctor; who thus made use of the insane to act as living advertisements of his profession. He likewise met gentlemen carrying hawks and falcons upon their wrists, whilst the citizens, to imitate them, carried inferior sorts of birds. The dresses of the people were different from those which he was accustomed to see. There were shoes with long sharp-pointed ends, turned up at the toes, with chains reaching to the knees; cloth caps trimmed with fur, and gay-coloured attire.

At last Jehan arrived, not without some difficulty in finding his way, at the shop of Master Laurent. It was nothing better than a wooden building, erected for a temporary purpose, as the great fair of Tours had just begun.



THE SERF. Page 183.

Master Laurent was a little man, seemingly very open and downright in his manners, always laughing, but as sly and cunning as a fox. He at once led Jehan into the back shop, made him sit down, placed before him a jug of new wine, a small loaf of rye-bread, the remains of a piece of beef, and then asked him for an account of himself.

The son of Thomas Rufus frankly told the history of his life, and what circumstances had brought him to Tours. Master Laurent heard him, uttering an exclamation every now and then, and laughing when there was nothing to laugh at. At length, when Jehan had finished, he said :

‘Very good, Jehan, I see what it is: you are a hero, ha! ha! ha! There is no harm in saying so, my good fellow. If you are fond of fighting, you can thrash the shop-boys of my neighbours when they are insolent, which they often are. It is not quite so dangerous a sort of work as knocking over Master Moreau the steward, ha! ha! ha! I shall never seem to take notice of the fact when you give the young rascals what they deserve, ha! ha! ha! But, speaking seri-

ously about business, take care not to be cheated by anybody, nor to break any of the rules of the fair. These regulations are things to be held sacred by tradesmen, as no one can act contrary to them without having to pay a fine. I have written out a set of rules, which all in my service ought to know, and which you must learn by heart.'

Whilst speaking, Master Laurent opened a drawer, from which he took a manuscript which had been very often used and thumbed, if the soiled and dirty margins of the leaves were any proofs of the fact. Jehan found it to be a sort of commercial catechism, in which the draper and clothier stated most of the general rules necessary for one in his trade.

'I have written in that a great deal of what you ought to know, my lad,' observed Master Laurent; 'but there are a—what shall I call them?—a few little clever things in the trade which would make people too wise if I were to write them down. We keep these good things to ourselves. For instance, a shopman must

know how to recommend his master's goods, and, when an opportunity offers, he must cleverly change one set of goods for another, so as to let the customer think that he has got the better sort while in reality he has not ; and if measuring stuffs, he ought never to handle the measure so as to give too much : but, of the two, it would not hurt his master, and would make him a more valuable servant, if his measure were to slip, and, on account of this trifling accident, he were to give the measure a trifle too short. You understand ? ha ! ha ! ha !'

'All this would be downright roguery,' objected Jehan.

Laurent shrugged his shoulders. "When one is at Rome, one must do as they do at Rome," said he. 'Do you think that other tradesmen are a bit more honest in these days ? Are the public any honester in such times as these ? Why, we have people who get into our debt, and then take refuge in the sanctuary of some church, where they snap their fingers at us. There are others who, after having given us

bills for the amount they owe us, make over these bills to some powerful men, who, taking advantage of their position, threaten us with all kinds of dreadful treatment if we do not consent to reduce the amount of what is due to us by one-third or one-half,—not to speak of those cheats that fail to pay any one, and run away no one knows whither.'

'But can you not obtain justice?'

'A man cannot here seize the property of such dishonest or bankrupt fellows, except by a warrant from a magistrate, and under his inspection. There are such things as fees and lawyers' bills. A fine sum it would cost to send somebody on the heels of a runaway debtor!' answered Laurent. 'You know nothing about trade, else you would not contradict my opinions. I ought, I think, to know more about it than you.'

'But you are a freeman, though you have all this to put up with. Liberty must sweeten a great many lesser evils, after a man has known what it is to be a serf.'

'*You* are not free,' answered Laurent in a

snarling tone. 'And if you do not do as you are told, and serve your master's interests without preaching sermons about honesty, you will have a rough time of it.'

'No offence, Master Laurent,' replied Jehan humbly. 'I meant no offence ; I only ventured, as a matter of conscience ——'

'Conscience!' roared Laurent ; 'what have you to do with any conscience except my orders? My orders are your best conscience, young man. A fine thing for a serf to talk to his master about conscience ! When I was a serf, I did as I was told. All that you have got to do is to do the same. But I am wrong in getting into a passion with you. Work, young man, and in time, mark me, by perfect obedience, you may, say in perhaps ten or fifteen years, become a freeman. You can then try to have a conscience of your own. But even then you will not have things exactly your own way. You will have to perform military service ; you will have to cut the throats, whether you like it or not, of men whom you have never seen before, and with whom

you have no personal quarrel—or, what is perhaps not quite so agreeable, some of these men may manage to cut your throat first, ha! ha! ha! All for what? Why, because two kings, or, worse still, two lords, happen to quarrel; for in these good feudal times the right of private as well as of national war exists. A serf has not to fight or go to the wars. They do not trust him with arms; but a freeman has to fight on one side or the other. If you have a conscience, young man, I might advise you to go into the church and become a priest if you can, which is now, unlike what it was formerly, very difficult for a serf to do. But even then you will have the Pope and cardinals and bishops over you; and if you will not obey them, and begin to talk of your conscience—why, I would not give much for your life. There was a man somewhere abroad—in Bohemia, I think—who got odd notions about liberty of conscience by reading the writings of one John Wicklyffe, an Englishman. Well, this man, John Huss, was burnt alive, in 1415, for having too

much conscience. I hope you do not read such works. Take care, young man! take care!’

‘Then there is no such thing as freedom or liberty of conscience in the world?’

‘Very little at present in these good feudal times. I do not know what the world will be three or four hundred years hence. Perhaps there may be then no wars, no throat-cutting, no violence, no cheating, no tricks of the trade, no rogues, no forced military service, no Pope, no cardinals, no bishops, etc. etc., but only fellows like you who have a conscience. However, it is time to attend to business, and cease talking. Come into the shop, and I will show you how to serve the customers.’

So saying, Laurent took Jehan into the shop. But a few days’ experience soon showed Jehan that he had merely changed one form of slavery for another,—in its way perhaps worse. He was in a city, it is true; but he was not more free than he was before. As for gaining freedom in ten or fifteen years, the question was, whether he would live so long, exposed as he would be

to the endless petty tyranny of Master Laurent, who, notwithstanding his ready 'ha! ha! ha!' was of a spiteful disposition, if crossed. Meantime, the novelty of his situation slightly kept him from becoming hopeless. The fair at Tours was at its height.

Communications between different localities were at this period too irregular, and attended with too many dangers and difficulties for commerce to be carried on, on the system which it is at present. Each town could not obtain at any time stocks of goods whenever it required them. The hawking of goods about for sale was then the grand means of supplying the public; and the great towns and centres of population were furnished with goods at certain periods, when merchants, salesmen, and buyers all met. These fairs turned for a time the towns in which they were held into large commercial marts, in which were collected and sold large stocks of all kinds of goods and produce. These marts were favoured by the municipal authorities of the towns, and they even made great and expensive

efforts to attract buyers and sellers. Some of the authorities went so far as to maintain armed bodies of men along the roads, in order to protect the persons and property of traders against the bands of robbers which infested the country, in the same lawless manner that bands of pirates infested the seas. The violent and grasping conduct of some of the barons also rendered travelling dangerous; and, from these and other causes, it became so difficult and perilous, that the greater part of the people of Europe remained stationary at home.

The fair of Tours, although not one of the most important in France, nevertheless attracted a considerable number of traders, foreigners, etc. Their stalls, decked with flags, were full of jugglers, who attracted the curiosity of the crowd. There might be seen tapestry-makers from Arras; woollen drapers from Sedan; confectioners from Verdun, with preparations made with honey for the middle-class,—with sugar for the gentry; glovers from Orleans, offering for sale the celebrated large gloves, without divi-

sions for the fingers, but for the thumb only—made of chamois skin, embroidered, lined with sable, and used, for the purpose of carrying falcons. These were sold at the price of nine pounds—that is to say, equal in value to one hundred and forty-four bushels of wheat. There were Italians with finely-wrought weapons from Milan, and Germans with badly-made ones from their country. Apothecaries were asking almost the weight in gold for sugar and brandy; and boot and shoe makers from Montpellier exhibited immense stocks of their leather goods. There were dealers with manuscripts embellished with miniatures, bound in velvet, in crimson, and ornamented with precious stones, a single copy of which would sell for a thousand pounds. The southern traders exposed for sale their rich stuffs, interwoven with silver, gold, and pearls. The goldsmiths and silversmiths had their counters glittering with cups, goblets, and chased plates and dishes. There were also many other traders of inferior grades, such as pewterers, bird-sellers, dog-fanciers, spice-merchants; and lastly (keeping

together as a separate class) the Jews, distinguished by their yellow caps, exhibited nothing for sale, yet sold nearly every kind of article, and transacted more business than all the other traders.

There were at the fair, as was the case at other fairs, inspectors of the goods, the weights, and the money. There was a court composed of arbitrators, that at once heard and decided all disputes. There were also a great number of notaries, specially appointed to draw up agreements and deeds relating to sales and purchases. These documents had certain privileges, according to the fair in which they were used. Constables, aided by one hundred other officers of justice, maintained order and arrested thieves.

Money could not be lent, even for the purposes of trade, at a higher rate of interest than fifteen per cent.; and a tradesman who solicited the custom of any purchaser who was nearer the shop of another than his own, was liable to be fined.

At first Jehan examined all these riches and

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products and new sights with great curiosity ; but as soon as the novelty was over, he felt intense disgust at the deceptions and the roguery that he saw taking place, and also' at the humble and degrading position he himself occupied in the social scale.

As Father Ambrose had, when he parted from Jehan, invited him to the convent, the young serf did not forget it ; and on the first Sunday that he obtained permission from his master, he went to the religious house of the Franciscan monks.





CHAPTER V.

JEHAN'S VISIT TO THE FRANCISCANS.

FATHER AMBROSE received the young serf in the kind and soothing manner that those acquire who are in the habit of comforting the afflicted. He led him first into the refectory, or room in which the meals were taken, and made him sit among the novices, or those who were training to be monks or friars. All were just about to take their seats at the table. When the meal was over, Father Ambrose showed Jehan over the place. Jehan then visited the gardens, cultivated by the monks themselves, the produce of which was esteemed to be the best in the district. He then proceeded to the cloisters and galleries, in which the monks walked to and fro, their hands often

covered by the large sleeves of their gowns, and their heads bent as they meditated upon God and the salvation of mankind. Thence he went to the chapel, in which the brethren united their hearts and voices in one common prayer. He afterwards visited the cells. It would be painful for an enlightened person, in our happier times, to have noticed the absence of the Bible—the word of God—in these rooms. Its absence was not noticed by Jehan, in his benighted state of mind; he thought, because he saw the crucifix in each cell, that the inmates must be very pious persons.

It must be remembered that in those violent times people sought safety for their persons, or for the purpose of leading quiet lives, in religious houses. In those troublous times, violence and injustice and wrong-doing would not permit peaceably disposed persons to live elsewhere in the kingdom, protected by the law of the land. Might was right in too many cases. The Church, dark and superstitious as it was, became the only means, from its possessing a glimmer of the light of God's word, by which mankind could

be made acquainted with God's commandment,—to do to others as men would that others should do to them. The terrors of the next world, as ever they must, forced the more thinking part of mankind not to be in utter rebellion against God and His gospel. In spite of everything, truth was gradually weakening and abolishing evil customs, and preparing the world for the coming great Protestant Reformation by Luther, Calvin, and others.

Father Ambrose afterwards took Jehan into the library, with the sight of which he was greatly delighted. The manuscripts, ranged in order and properly bound, amounted in number to several hundreds. The father informed the young serf that these were the property of the monastery. The two were on their way to the rooms used as places for study, when Father Ambrose was called away, as some one wished to speak with him. The new-comer was a man who had his face covered with a piece of cloth, and who had come to consult the monk concerning a case of conscience.

Jehan proceeded alone to the grounds outside, where he found the novices. One of them recognised him, and spoke to him, mentioning his name. He was the son of one of the neighbours of the father of Jehan. The young serf told him his adventures, and why he was at Tours.

‘Why do you not enter our monastery, Jehan?’ asked the novice after he had finished. ‘Here we live *retired from the world*, and sheltered from its iniquities; here there are neither nobles nor serfs. We enjoy as much liberty as the Pope and cardinals will let us have. Father Ambrose, our Superior, is a pious man; and our lives ought to be passed in useful labours, good works, and in prayer,—so that we ought, as much as possible, to make this place a little heaven on earth. The nobles and others, who hold so many persons in slavery, and trample on the rights of so many in this world, have no power over us. If they were to venture to trespass upon our rights, we would overpower them by means of excommunications from the society of all Christians; and if they were to attack us by force, the Pope

and kings of the earth would cry for vengeance, and take it.'

'All this is very true,' said Jehan; 'but you purchase it at the cost of the greatest happiness that man can enjoy on earth: you see neither mother nor sisters; you may never have a home of your own, and taste the sweets of domestic life. I could never accept a freedom which would separate me for ever from Catherine.'

'Return, then, to the world,' replied the novice. 'You will soon find out that the more ties you have in it, the more easy is it for sorrow to overtake you. Those who were born serfs, as we were, cannot choose their means of becoming free. If they wish to gain liberty for their souls and minds, they must make the sacrifice of their earthly affections and instincts. The monastery is, in the times we live in, a foretaste of the grave: in it we bury worldly hopes, fears, expectations, and domestic joys. What hope we have, is of the life to come in heaven.'

Jehan returned thoughtful and musing to his home at Master Laurent's. Notwithstanding the

words of the young novice, life in the cloister among the monks would not completely satisfy his desires. He was of an age when young people have not yet been taught to moderate their expectations and wants by the sharp teachings of reality—when the idle dreams of youth seem likely to be possibly fulfilled—and when experience had not, as yet, taught him that every human being must submit to the effects of the laws and customs of the community in which he is living.

But if he could not reconcile his ideas to the thoughts of leading a life according to the rules of the monastery, that which he was now leading did not please him better. Tours, it is true, like other towns in France, enjoyed a great amount of freedom; but Jehan found, as many have found since in the freest countries, that there are white slaves even in the midst of a free political, social system.

Jehan had to serve a harsh master, who was furious that he would not practise all the tricks of the trade. He sold the goods, as Master Laurent would mockingly observe, as though he

were standing in the pulpit and preaching a sermon, instead of standing in a shop serving customers. When Jehan, in answer to questions respecting the quality of the goods, replied to the intending purchaser, 'This is good,—this is of medium quality,—I cannot recommend this,' Laurent would frequently fall into a dreadful passion, during which he would express his wrath in abuse of every description.

At last it occurred one day that Jehan had to exchange some old and new pieces of money. The coinage in France during the feudal ages was in a very unsatisfactory condition. The great nobles coined money at their own mints, as well as the King's Government at the royal mint. Both kings and nobles were in the habit of debasing the coin. The mixing of baser metal with the silver had grown to such a height, that at last the so-called silver coinage from the mints of the nobles contained more copper than silver. The King of France also raised a revenue by debasing the coin struck at the royal mint. Philip the Fair, who reigned from 1285 to 1314,

raised a part of his revenue in this way. In England, on the contrary, no noble ever enjoyed the same right as in France, of coining money without the royal permission. At last, in France a prohibition was issued forbidding the further coining of silver money by private persons. Thus, whilst this confusion in the coinage lasted, silver coins might bear the same nominal value and name, but be very different in real value, according to the amount of alloy. It is evident, also, that the older coins, before the debasing of the coinage became so general, were of greater real value than the more modern debased coin.

Jehan, therefore, was *silly* enough, as Laurent expressed it, to lose a fine chance of making something by the exchange, by taking advantage of the ignorance of the customers. He got so furious because Jehan had given the full value of the money, that from words he proceeded to blows, and struck him. The mind of the young man was made up at once: he quitted the shop, ran to the river Loire, and seeing a vessel approaching, he plunged into the water to reach her by swimming.

The men on board received him kindly, and consented to take him to Blois, to which place they were going. Their vessel was conveying to this town cannons and culverins. It was the first time that Jehan had seen these dreadful engines of destruction, though he had heard from the worthy chaplain who taught him, of Roger Bacon, who was said to have invented the magic lantern in 1252, and who was also supposed to have known something about gunpowder ; and he had likewise heard of Schwartz, a German, who made gunpowder in 1330, and how firearms and cannons began to come into use in 1345. Jehan had learned many things not generally known by those in his station of life, on account of the partiality shown to him by the chaplain of the castle, and the pleasure that good man took in instructing one so anxious to learn.

Jehan took leave of the men on board the vessel, on their arrival at Blois, and directed his steps towards Paris ; but the little money that he possessed was soon spent, and he was obliged to beg.

As he was entering the suburbs of Orleans, he met a funeral, which had just come out of a large, handsome house. The coffin was carried by some of the poor people of the city, and an effigy made of wax was placed upon the lid of the coffin. Several paces behind followed a mountebank, who was dressed in the clothes of the deceased, whose deportment and walk during life he imitated so well, that the relations who came behind could not restrain their tears. Jehan was informed that the deceased had ordered three pence to be paid to every poor person who came to his late residence on the day of his funeral. Jehan did not fail to present himself, and received his share of the legacy there and then.

He continued to travel on in the direction of Paris. One night he arrived at the summit of a hill, whence nothing else could be seen than moors and forests, without any village or houses. He was fearing that he should have to pass the night in the open air, when he saw behind a clump of trees a thin column of smoke. He pro-

ceeded in this direction, and came to a hut, on which was a small bell.

The door was open, but there was no person inside the place. As the night was falling, and the mists made the evening chill, Jehan resolved to await the return of the inmate of this dwelling. It was not long before he made his appearance. He had a small keg slung at his side, and he seemed to have often turned the tap, if his noisy manner was any indication of it. At the sight of Jehan he burst into a loud laugh.

‘Who is this stranger that has come into my palace?’ exclaimed he.

Jehan told him why and how he had entered.

‘You did not notice the little bell on my hut, then?’ said he.

‘No, I did not,’ replied Jehan.

‘You do not know, then, where you are?’

‘Where am I?’

The only reply made by the man was to open the goat-skin in which he was clad, and to expose to view a peculiar garment, from the waist of which was hanging a rattle and a cup.

‘A leper!’ exclaimed the young man, springing up from his seat with one bound.

‘It is not my fault that you entered,’ observed the fellow, with a laugh.

‘I am going,’ said Jehan as he reached the door. ‘Only, be so kind as to tell me if I am far from any village.’

‘About nine miles; and you must pass through a wood in which you will be certain to have your throat cut.’

‘No matter; I cannot remain here.’

‘Why not? Are you frightened at the scabs which cover my face, and the sores that cover my arms?’ asked the leper. ‘I may perhaps do without these pleasant companions for one night;’ and taking a piece of rag, he washed off the hideous marks with which he was covered.

Jehan could not restrain an exclamation of surprise.

‘My disease is, as you see, easily cured,’ said the sham leper, laughing. ‘To-morrow I shall get ill again, in order to go my rounds to beg.’

Jehan still continued to stand close to the door.

‘Come in,’ said the man. ‘You see that you have nothing to fear from my leprosy. Shut the door and take a stool. I will let you see how the lepers who understand their trade manage to live.’

So saying, he drew a table near the fire, placed upon it the remains of a pickled tongue, some fresh pork, and the keg, still half full; then, forcing Jehan to take a seat opposite to him, he began to eat his supper with a hearty appetite.

‘You have feigned a disease which separates you for ever from the rest of mankind,’ said Jehan, who looked upon the sham leper with an astonishment not unmingled with horror. ‘How could you do such a thing?’

‘For the reason that this disease gives me sufficient to eat, whilst my good health would let me starve, and probably die of hunger,’ replied the man. ‘I have found out something better than that.’

‘I have been by turns huntsman, juggler, labourer, and courier, but always a serf, and, as such, miserable. I had at one time some idea of turning a hermit, but I was told that I ought

to be a freeman for that ; so I turned a leper instead, since it was the only way I knew of by which I could live at my ease and how I like. A beggar in Paris taught me how to imitate sores and ulcers with some stuff, so I had not much difficulty in passing myself off for a leper. They built me this hut soon afterwards on this hill ; they gave me a cow, an orchard, a vine ; the clergyman gave me a shroud, read the burial-service over me, threw a shovelful of earth over my head ; they then left me to myself, promising to furnish me with what I wanted every week ; and they have never failed to do so.'

'But you cannot associate with your fellow-creatures.'

'Of course I cannot. I am forbidden to attend any public meeting—to speak to any one when the wind is blowing towards the person. I am not permitted to drink at the fountains, or to pass through lanes and narrow places, or to touch children. I live alone. I inspire disgust and horror. What then ? Do you think that ease

and liberty are too dearly purchased at such a cost? Not they!’

‘May I be preserved from purchasing them at such a price!’ thought Jehan. ‘But why is it that we live in a world in which they are to be obtained at so great a sacrifice? It is the wickedness of man struggling against the word and commands of God.’

The words in the fifty-eighth Psalm, which Jehan had read in the Latin Bible in the chaplain’s library, came into his mind: ‘Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.’

The supper over, the man extended a goat-skin upon the earthen floor, on which the young serf passed the night. On the morrow he took leave of the sham leper, and continued his journey to Paris.

As he passed through the thick wood in which his host had told him he would be sure to have his throat cut, he was startled by mounted men-at-arms, who galloped past him at full speed,

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as if intent on the pursuit of the robbers who then infested all the forests in the country.

About a mile farther on, Jehan saw the marks of a recent struggle. The grass was trampled upon; the boughs of the underwood were broken; there were fragments of clothing lying about, some of them stained with blood, and weapons that had been thrown away by some in their hasty flight. Jehan thought that it might be a good chance for him to pick up a weapon, in case he should meet with more robbers before he emerged from the wood. While looking about to choose the best, he found a purse containing a large sum of money. He took it up, intending, if he should meet the men-at-arms he had seen, to ask them about it, and if possible restore it to its owner. But it was evident that the struggle that had taken place had for the time cleared that part of the forest from the robbers; and Jehan reached the more inhabited part of the country without meeting with any other adventure.

The nearer he approached the great city, travellers became more numerous. At one time

he met a band of cavaliers magnificently dressed ; at another time a body of archers in leathern garments, with steel caps on their heads, and carrying swords in addition to their bows, etc. ; then he met traders going on business to the neighbouring towns.

At last Paris itself appeared in view—steeple and towers and pointed roofs ; and its distant roar was heard.

When Jehan entered Paris he wandered for several days about the streets, supporting himself by asking alms of charitable people, or at the gates of monasteries and convents. It distressed him much to be reduced to beg, but he had no alternative until he could find work to do. Meanwhile he gazed with wonder and admiration at the magnificent buildings of the great capital. What struck him with most astonishment was to see the streets paved, and some of them with shops on each side, all of the same trade ; also, to traverse the immense market-places, in which were goods and products from many countries.

The love of study, already created in Jehan by the lessons he had received from the Count's chaplain at the castle, increased still more at the sight of all the means for learning which Paris presented. He also felt instinctively that education was the only thing that could improve the mind, and so render him better fitted for freedom whenever it might come, besides making his intellect free even before his body had become so.

Up to this time Jehan had carefully kept the purse he had found in the wood, without spending a single coin out of it. He had honestly meant to restore it, if possible, to the owner; but now, after so long a time had elapsed, it seemed impossible that it could ever be traced. There were no newspapers then, with their speedy advertisements sending notices of things lost all over the country. The money Jehan had found could not be returned to its rightful owner. 'Perhaps,' thought he, 'it belonged to the robbers, and may have been the plunder which they had stolen.' If so, the true owner

could never be found, and, in the circumstances, Jehan felt justified in keeping it.

It was a large sum ; it would provide him with food and clothing for at least a year, and would leave something over for other things. It would have been enough to buy his freedom, but he did not dare return home after having run away from Master Laurent: he feared that not only would he be punished, but that Master Moreau would take all his money from him. He therefore resolved to use it.

It was now in his power to realize the dream which he had almost hopelessly cherished: he had now the means to buy books and attend the University of Paris, and so complete the studies which he had begun with the good chaplain, and of which he as yet knew only the rudiments.

He consequently wrote to his father to make his mind easy about him. He entrusted his letter to a pilgrim, who was going to pass near the dwelling of Thomas Rufus, on his way to some shrine. In those days pilgrims were often

the surest and safest means of conveying such epistles. With no other fortune than a staff, a rosary, and a splinter of what was supposed to be the true cross, they had nothing to fear from the numerous bands of robbers and lawless individuals that rendered travelling so dangerous to other persons.

As Jehan's father could not read, the pilgrim promised to read the letter to him.





CHAPTER VI.

JEHAN IN PARIS.

THE letter that Jehan wrote was as follows:—

‘DEAR AND HONOURED FATHER,—
I am now in Paris, and quite well. You are doubtless in great trouble about me just at present, particularly if you have heard of my flight from the shop of Master Laurent. People will not have failed to speak of it as a fresh proof of my stubbornness; but I did not run away, my dear father, except to avoid a still greater evil. Master Laurent forgot that I am a man like himself, redeemed and ransomed by the blood of Christ, and he wished to treat me in the same manner as the Count’s steward did. I only left him, in order not to raise my hand against a master whose bread I had eaten.

‘Please to tell the contents of this letter to Kate, who will understand my conduct, and will not blame me.

‘May God protect you in His mercy, and me also.—Your affectionate son,

‘JEHAN.’

When this letter was written and sent, Jehan felt easier in his mind, and hastened to present himself at the University of Paris. He carried, as was the custom with all scholars, his books in one hand, and in the other a bunch of straw on which to sit ; but when he sought to enter the class, he was asked for the authorization in writing by which his lord gave him permission to engage in the course of study pursued at the University of Paris. Jehan stood confused and silent.

‘No serf can enter any class without the permission of his master,’ said the official who had to enter the names of the students.

‘It is not enough for them to be the masters of our bodies,’ muttered Jehan ; ‘they must also

be masters of our souls and minds!' and he retired, with his heart overflowing with bitterness.

A longer stay in Paris was now useless. He debated within himself whether he ought to return or not to his native village, come what might, when one night the gates of the city were shut in the midst of a great alarm. All the lamps that were burning in the streets near the niches of the saints were extinguished, and an order was issued for the inhabitants to have a bucket of water and a lighted candle before every door. The English had ascended the river Seine, and were approaching Paris.

Early the next morning, the watch-fires of their advanced guard could be seen, and the rest of their army appeared soon afterwards, and encamped on both sides of the river.

All men capable of bearing arms in the city were hastily summoned to defend Paris; even the tradesmen assembled with loud shouts and cries. Stones were carried to the ramparts to be thrown down upon the assailants, and also bags

filled with earth to ward off the arrows and protect the defenders.

By degrees, the first terror was followed by confidence, then by contempt, as the forces of the English were small compared to the number of armed men in Paris. There were cries that the expected attack of the enemy ought to be anticipated by making an attack upon his camp. The knights, officers, and men-at-arms were assembled; the most determined of the tradesmen joined them; a gate was opened, and they marched to fight the English.

Jehan, who had found a halberd in the general confusion, went with this troop.

They soon arrived in front of the enemy, who having perceived them, were prepared to receive them. The English archers first advanced against the corps of citizens, which marched a short distance in front of the other French forces; but as this corps of Parisians knew the locality well, the men took advantage of the shelter afforded by the nature of the ground; and the arrows of the archers, although they inflicted some loss, could

not stop the march of the citizens towards the English camp.

The French horsemen seeing this, and not wishing to display less courage, charged at full speed ; but whether they miscalculated the distance, or whether they lightly esteemed the citizen soldiers of Paris, they rode down some of their own countrymen in front of them. Great disorder ensued, by which the English archers did not fail to profit ; and the confusion was increased still more by the arrival of a body of English horsemen.

Meantime the French horsemen, who had either by their blundering or ill-will evidently endangered the success of the battle, tried to redeem their past misconduct by desperate bravery.

Jehan, who had been drawn into the thickest of the fight, was knocked down several times by the horses ; but he rose again to his feet, more eager than ever to fight on. He had just escaped the arrow of an archer, when he found himself close to an English knight, who was striking right and left with his sword. The young serf did not

give the knight time to make a cut at him. He struck him with the halberd on the weakest part of his armour. The knight fell. Jehan seized the Englishman's sword, caught hold of the bridle of the horse, leaped into the saddle, and dashed among the foe.

Until then, the issue of the fight had seemed uncertain ; but a large body of additional troops arriving from Paris, the advanced guard of the English, to avoid being overpowered by numbers, fell back on their main body, which, seeing the numerous forces which had come out of Paris, and were still pouring out of the gates of the city, retreated in the direction of the coast. Jehan, in company with other horsemen, pursued the retreating foe for some time ; but night coming on, and finding himself almost alone, he returned towards Paris.

He was crossing the fields at a slow pace, when he heard some low groans. He dismounted, and proceeded in the direction whence the sounds seemed to come. He found a knight stretched motionless on the ground. Jehan raised him by

a great effort, unbuckled his armour, and restored him to consciousness.

The knight informed him that, having pursued the enemy, although he was wounded, his strength had failed him on the way, and that he had fallen down senseless. Believing Jehan to be a man-at-arms, he begged him to lend him his horse, mentioned the house where he resided in Paris, and offered one of his golden spurs as a pledge of good faith. Jehan refused the pledge, but lent the horse, saying that he would call for it. The gentleman then rode off on horseback, leaving Jehan to find his way back to Paris on foot.

The trial which the young serf had just made of his powers, taught him that he possessed courage; and the success he had achieved caused him to feel a great deal of pride and self-exaltation, which was as new as it was pleasant to him. He liked the sort of equality that the field of battle seemed to create between all the combatants, and the terrible liberty left to every one there to slay and wound. There were also, according as the fortunes of the fight

varied, the successive emotions of dread, terror, hope, joy, and pride. 'Besides,' thought he, 'in a state of society of men in which might is right, the soldier ought to be more independent than the serf, and happier.'

These ideas kept running in his head all night, until, becoming calmer, he reflected that the soldier's lot had many hardships, and that discipline, obedience, and the fortune of war would not allow him to enjoy freedom from all restraints, evils, and sufferings.

On the morrow he presented himself at the house of the knight, who asked what he would like to have in return for the service which he had done him.

'I wish to enter the ranks of the King's men-at-arms,' replied Jehan.

'Are you a serf or a freeman?' asked the knight.

'A serf.'

'Then the thing is impossible. The blood of the serf ought to be shed only in the service of his lord, if at all. Serfs are not usually called

upon for military service. Their lot is to work in peace, if possible.'

'Always the same thing over and over again,' thought Jehan as he left the knight's house,— 'always the same obstacle. It is impossible to escape the ill effects of the condition in which I was born. It seems to set a mark upon me, such as Cain had. I can wait no longer; I must break this chain, cost what it may!'

The same evening he left Paris, mounted on the war-horse he had taken in the fight.

He went through the forest of Bondy, full of charcoal-burners, and artisans who made all kinds of wooden ware. Just as he was about to quit the forest, he met a troop of persons under the leadership of a priest. They were travelling in two chariots drawn by mules; they were the members of a company of individuals from Paris that travelled about France playing 'Mysteries,'—representations of scriptural scenes. Jehan entered into conversation with the priest, to whom he related part of his misfortunes.

This personage, who looked with an envious

eye upon the steed of the young man, proposed at once that Jehan should join his troop. The part of *Mortal Sin*, in the pastoral called *The Good and the Bad End*, was vacant, and he assured him that he would be doing a laudable action in furthering the good cause, in helping to represent these 'Mysteries;' besides which, he would enjoy an amount of liberty and prosperity that no other profession or calling could give him. Jehan was persuaded. He took his place in one of the chariots, to which his horse was then attached, and he continued his journey with the troop of Father Chouard.

Unfortunately, the promises of this personage were, like his 'Mysteries,' *sonitus et vacuum, sed præterea nihil* (sound and vacuum, and nothing more). Jehan was not long in finding out that they were objects of merited contempt everywhere.

At this period of transition, when the feudal system was drawing nigh its end, the need of a position and the love of adventure forced into a wandering sort of life all those persons to whom



the rigorous classification of the feudal system had become insupportable. It was thus that the strolling bands were formed that roamed about France, including bodies of pilgrims that were to be met with on most of the roads, as also companies of players that, under different names, visited even the smallest towns in the kingdom. The one that Father Chouard had under him was composed of clergymen in debt, students who had misconducted themselves, and runaway bankrupts, who would just as readily have joined a band of robbers. Father Chouard himself had only taken the leadership of the company in order to have better opportunities for leading a wandering and vagabond life. At the end of a month, the bad receipts, the expenses of travelling, and the careless, spendthrift habits of the members of the troop, had exhausted all their means. The chariots, mules, and horses were seized by an innkeeper at Troyes, to pay for what was due to him. Jehan endeavoured in vain to claim his horse, by protesting that it did not belong to the troop. The innkeeper would

not pay any attention to his statements. His money had been stolen before by some of his unscrupulous companions.

Jehan next tried to save his horse by threatening Father Chouard, whom he declared he would have brought before a magistrate; but Chouard gave him to understand that, if he were to proceed to such extremities, he (Chouard) would be forced to disclose Jehan's name, his rank in life, where he was born, and the authorities would not fail to send him back to Count Ralph as a runaway serf, who had fled from his master's domains. Jehan felt that Chouard had power to do this, and he was obliged to keep silent.

Happily, on the same day, a traveller who was staying at the same inn, and had seen Jehan's misfortune, came to him.

'I am a bookseller,' said he to him. 'I employ more than fifty writers to copy books; I know that you use the pen with great skill, as I have seen in the bills written by you for Father Chouard. Enter my service, and you will gain the same that my other writers earn, which is

enough to keep you in a respectable manner. Reflect on this offer, and let me know your decision to-morrow.'

The next day Jehan followed his new employer on the road to Besançon.





CHAPTER VII.

JEHAN'S VISIT TO HIS OLD MASTER.

MORE than a year after this, Count Ralph was standing in the great hall of his castle, listening impatiently to Master Moreau, who was reading a document written on parchment.

‘So at last all is finished!’ said the Count, suddenly interrupting the steward. ‘The sale has taken place: is it not so?’

‘The sale of the property has been effected, my lord.’

‘Then, if I understand correctly what you have been reading, I have sold to the Duke of Vaujour one of the most valuable parts of my landed property, with all the villeins and serfs on it,’ said the Count bitterly, as if taking

a savage pleasure in stating his misfortunes aloud.

‘The Duke’s men of business are coming to take possession of the property to-day. There are many families of villeins and serfs assembled in the large court to see you, my lord, and bid you farewell.’

‘I will not see them,’ said Count Ralph; ‘their lamentations will give me pain. Poor people! I am obliged to turn them over to a ferocious brute rather than a man, as the Duke is scarcely human. Crusading to the Holy Land has impoverished our estates. My worthy ancestors left fearful debts on the lands, by raising money to go to the East. I have done all I could not to sell any of the land, but creditors will not wait for their money any longer. These loans after loans to pay off old debts, what with interest upon interest, have increased to something tremendous during these hundreds of years. Well, I cannot help it. Attend to the affair, Moreau, and see that my interests do not suffer by their taking an inch more land than they ought.’

At this moment a servant entered the room.

‘What is it?’ asked the Count quickly.

The servant answered that a man with a pack on his back wished to see the Count on particular business, as he had something important to communicate.

‘Some fellow with his bill, pressing for payment, I suppose, Moreau,’ said the Count in a low tone to his steward, so as not to be overheard by the servant; ‘or, perhaps, some Jew to offer the loan of money at fifty or sixty per cent. However, I suppose I must see him. Show the fellow in,’ added he aloud to the servant.

The servant left the hall, and soon returned with a young man of sunburnt complexion, clad in dusty, travel-worn attire, and who carried a colporteur’s pack on his back.

He uncovered his head as soon as he saw the Count, and remained standing silently until the Count should speak to him.

‘You sent a message saying that you have something of importance to communicate to me,’ said the Count roughly.

‘Yes, my lord,’ replied the colporteur.

The sound of the man’s voice seemed to make Master Moreau start: he looked earnestly at the colporteur. ‘This is no stranger!’ said he, approaching the man, near whom he remained standing, motionless with surprise and almost fear.

‘What is the matter, Moreau?’ asked the Count.

‘As sure as I am a living man,’ replied the steward, ‘this colporteur is—is ——’

‘Is what?’ said the Count.

‘One of your serfs, my lord.’

‘One of my serfs!’

‘It is that Jehan, who ran away from Master Laurent some time ago.’

‘Is this true?’ asked the Count of the colporteur.

‘It is true, my lord,’ answered the colporteur.

‘And you dare come here, you worthless fellow!’ exclaimed the steward. ‘Do you know that my lord could have you well flogged?’

Jehan gave the steward a look of contempt.

‘My lord has all power and authority over the serfs on his property,’ replied he coolly; ‘but not over those who have obtained the right of citizenship in a free city.’

‘Why do you speak about the rights of citizenship?’ said the Count. ‘Have you obtained your freedom from me?’

‘No, my lord; but I possess it by privilege.’

‘What are you talking about? What privilege?’ demanded the Count.

‘Here is an official document stating that I have lived a year and a day in Besançon.’

‘In Besançon!’ repeated Moreau, seizing the parchment which Jehan held out.

‘And what does this matter to me?’ replied the Count.

‘My lord is, I daresay, aware that a residence in certain cities and towns gives freedom.’

‘Is it true?’ asked the Count, turning to Moreau.

‘Too true!’ uttered Moreau.

‘Then this fellow is free without my consent?’

‘Free from serfage,’ observed the steward;

‘but he does not remain less your vassal, bound to pay you homage, and serve you against all and every one excepting the King.’

‘This is what I am ready to do,’ replied Jehan.

‘Here is an impudent fellow for you,’ answered the Count. ‘Who has any right to make a law that a residence of a year and a day shall make a man free, and thus injure my rights? Why, these communities of citizens will become, at last, places of refuge for all the villeins and serfs belonging to the nobility!’

The Count was not alone in this opinion. Whilst many of the nobles granted charters to towns, and others from Christian feeling favoured the freedom of villeins and serfs as an act of piety in setting fellow-Christians free, other nobles—and there always are necessarily varieties of dispositions and characters in a large class of men—looked upon free towns and cities with great dislike; many of them being of the same opinion as a baronial abbot, who said ‘that free towns and cities were execrable inventions, by which, contrary to law and justice, slaves

withdrew themselves from that obedience which they owed to their masters.' But all the opposition of the nobles who did not favour this freedom was of no avail. The privileges once granted to the French towns and cities, were never lost; and the feudal power of the nobles became less and less, until it had nearly ceased.

'And you have come here to set me at defiance, I suppose?' continued Count Ralph to Jehan.

'Far be it from me to have such a thought, my lord,' said the young man.

'Then what do you want?'

'My lord has on his property an old man and a young woman—both serfs: the old man is my father, and the young woman is engaged to me to be my wife.'

'Well, what then?'

'I wish to purchase their freedom.'

'And I will not sell it,' exclaimed Count Ralph savagely. 'We shall see if they will obtain their freedom as you have, against my will.'

'Oh, my lord, you will not surely avenge

yourself in this cruel manner! You will not refuse!

‘I do refuse.’

‘But consider, my lord ——’

‘I do consider; and I know that your father and your intended wife are in my power, and they shall remain in it. I will have my will done this time, however you may have treated it with contempt.’

‘My lord has also disposed of Thomas Rufus and of Kate, the young woman this Jehan refers to,’ added the steward, with a malicious grin.

‘How so?’ exclaimed the Count.

‘Both of them form part of the serfs who have been sold with the land to the Duke of Vaujour.’

‘Can it be possible?’ exclaimed Jehan.

‘Yes,’ answered Count Ralph; ‘I have just sold some of my property, with all the serfs on it, including three villages, to the Duke; and you will not be able to get either the old man or the young girl out of his power, as he has sworn never to consent to grant freedom to any one.’

Jehan started and turned pale. He knew that the Duke of Vaujour was one of those ferocious beings to whom the sufferings of his fellow-creatures gave pleasure. Dreadful accounts were told of his cruelties. A number of his serfs, it was said, had died from ill-usage, or had fled. His lands were in consequence scarcely cultivated, and his villages had fallen into ruins. The bare idea that his father and Kate were to pass into the ownership of such a master, caused the young man to feel indescribable dread and terror.

‘I will submit to any conditions that my lord will please to order,’ said he; ‘but as my lord himself hopes to obtain mercy from heaven, let not my lord deliver those whom I love into the hands of the Duke of Vaujour.’

‘My lord cannot now alter any of the conditions made with the Duke when the property was sold,’ observed Moreau, who feared that the Count might relent, and yield to the entreaties of the young man.

‘I will give to my lord all that I possess in the world,’ exclaimed Jehan.

'I confess,' said the Count, 'that I am rather curious to know what a fellow like you can have in that pedlar's pack of yours.'

'I can pay down twelve old crowns,' replied Jehan quickly, and taking all his money out of the leathern purse that was hanging at his side.

'The sum is too small,' said Moreau dryly.

'Alas! I can give no more,' said Jehan; 'but take, if it must be, all my manuscripts in addition. Look, my lord: here are breviaries written in three inks, missals ornamented with capital letters in gold. Here are copies of Horace, and of the *Logic* of Aristotle. There are here at least manuscripts of the value of twenty crowns. Are they not enough to purchase the freedom of a poor old man and that of a young woman? I beseech you not to refuse my request. You would not surely take vengeance on me, my lord, as I am so weak and you are so strong. You know that no serf can continue long to exist on the lands belonging to the Duke of Vaujour; and to send my father and

Kate to live on them, would be to condemn them to tortures and death. Oh, you will have pity upon them! In the name of those whom you yourself hold dear, my lord, I entreat you to have mercy upon them and upon me.'

Jehan had knelt at the feet of the Count. The steward, who saw that the Count was beginning to waver, as his feelings were touched, ventured, in his malice, to draw him almost forcibly aside.

'Take care, my lord,' said he; 'if the example of Jehan were imitated, you would soon not have any villeins and serfs left at all.'

'Doubtless,' replied the other; 'but the sorrow of this young man distresses me.'

'If you will leave the hall, my lord, I will send him about his business.'

'But the twelve crowns and the manuscripts?'

'I will get them, my lord.'

'Really?'

'Yes, my lord; and Jehan shall not go the less unpunished, as he deserves to be, for the sake of example.'

‘Then I will leave the matter in your hands, to do the best you can concerning it.’

Turning to the young colporteur, who had remained all the time on his knees, with his hands clasped, the Count added :

‘I will not have any further dealings personally with a rebellious serf. Whatever proposals you have to make, must be made to Master Moreau.’ After having said this he left the hall.

Jehan, with dismay, saw him depart. The young man then rose slowly from his kneeling posture. As he did so his glance met that of the steward, and he involuntarily shuddered.

‘I am at your mercy, Master Moreau,’ said he in a depressed tone of voice. ‘What can I hope for?’

‘Are these twelve crowns and these manuscripts all the property that you possess in the world?’ asked the steward.

‘All.’

‘Then choose between your father and Kate.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Simply, that you cannot purchase more than the freedom of one of them.’

Jehan started back. The possibility of such a trial as this had never even entered his thoughts until now. He stood as though he were stupefied.

The steward regarded him with ill-concealed malicious joy.

‘Do you not understand me?’ asked he at last.

‘It is impossible,’ stammered Jehan : ‘you could never mean to offer me such a choice !’

‘Just as you please; then both of them must go to the Duke of Vanjour,’ said Moreau with indifference.

‘No!’ exclaimed the young man ; ‘both of them will remain. If what I can pay to-day be not sufficient, I will pledge my word to you that I will pay another sum equal to it as soon as I am able.’

Moreau shrugged his shoulders.

‘I do not enter promises to pay in my books and accounts, although I may keep them in bad

Latin, as you once said,' replied the steward dryly. 'Choose, and make haste, if you do not wish to be too late.'

He then opened a window, and Jehan beheld a courtyard filled with men, women, and children, whose names were being written down by a man. All were uttering sounds of grief, and some of the women were raising their eyes, filled with tears, to heaven.

'These are the villeins and serfs belonging to the land sold by the Count to the Duke of Vaujour,' said Moreau. 'The Duke's steward will soon arrive to take them away with him, and then any choice on your part will be useless. Decide, then, if you do not wish to lose both father and cousin.'

The situation of Jehan was horrible. Called upon to select for freedom one of the two beings, both of whom he was accustomed to consider as inseparably linked together in his affections, he durst not ask his heart which of the two he would decide to favour, to the injury of the other. To save Kate, would be to save at the same

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time his future happiness, and to assure the realization of all his hopes; but to save his father, was to pay the debt of gratitude that the past had left to him, in return for the self-sacrifices his father had often made for him,—in addition to which the commandments of God respecting parents came into his mind. Whichever way he should decide, the danger would be equal. Thus confused, and panting for breath, he felt incapable of uttering the decisive words which would have the effect of making him fail in duty to his parent, or of destroying his future happiness in life.

He fell upon his knees near the window, and with clasped hands implored God, for the sake of the Saviour, to support him under this trial, and to guide him aright in the choice that he should make.

At this moment Kate, whom he had not perceived before, suddenly appeared coming out of the crowd. Seeing her looking so beautiful, yet so sorrowful, Jehan could resist no longer: he rose from his knees with one spring, and

leaned as far as he could out of the window, to call out her name as the one whom he selected to be free. The words were on his lips, when just at this instant an old man appeared also, walking with great difficulty, and led by a child. Jehan recognised his father, and the words he was about to utter died away on his lips. He suddenly remembered all the affectionate care that the old man had taken of him—the tender love with which he had always treated him—the good advice that he had so constantly given him: all the remembrances of the years of childhood and youth rushed into his mind, and seemed, as it were, to invest the old man with almost a holy aspect.

Jehan's heart was touched; his feelings, overpowered by respect and pious gratitude, caused him to burst into tears, and to stretch out his arms.

'My father!' exclaimed he, 'give me my father! and may God have mercy upon me, and upon Kate!'



CHAPTER VIII.

THE TERRIBLE FATE OF THE SERFS.

SEVERAL months had passed away. The day was declining, the sun was sinking beneath the horizon, and his departing rays were streaming brightly over the forest of Vaujour, but in the surrounding country no sounds of life were audible, such as may usually be heard in inhabited districts. No sound of voices, no rolling of wheels, no lowing of cattle, no bleating of flocks, no tinkling or ringing of bells,—the fields were neglected or untilled, the houses were shut up and apparently deserted. It seemed as though some great calamity were afflicting the locality.

This calamity was war, and a war of the most frightful description,—a war in which the

adversaries spoke the same language, and had been a short time previously upon friendly terms with one another: it was a war between neighbours.

One of the customs belonging to the feudal system was the right of private war. Robertson, the historian, gives a full account of the usages permitted during private war. None other than gentlemen, or persons of noble birth, had the right of private war. All disputes between serfs, villeins, the inhabitants of towns, and freemen of inferior condition, were decided in the courts of justice, as were likewise all disputes between gentlemen on the one side, and persons of inferior rank on the other. The great ecclesiastics in the Roman Catholic Church also claimed and exercised the right of private war: as it was not even then considered altogether proper for a minister of religion to fight in person, they generally engaged champions for fighting out their battles for them. These champions, or *vidames* as they were called, were generally powerful nobles, who thus became the

protectors of various churches and convents, etc. Sometimes, however, a fighting priest of high degree would scorn to have the help of others; he would take the field himself at the head of his armed vassals.

It was not every quarrel that gave a gentleman permission to make private war upon his adversary; but though the avenging of great injuries was the only motive that could legally authorize a private war, yet disputes concerning property often gave rise to quarrels that were settled by the sword. All the kindred of the two or more gentlemen who quarrelled were obliged by legal authority to join in the war; though there were limits to this, which depended on the varying ecclesiastical laws relating to marriage in the Romish Church, first concerning persons related in the seventh degree, and afterwards, when the law was changed, concerning persons related in the fourth degree. A private war could not be carried on by two full brothers, though it might be by two half-brothers. The vassals of each chief in any private war were



forced to take part in the contest, as they were bound by law to fight for their lords, and support and aid them in every quarrel.

The sale of some of his property made by Count Ralph to the Duke of Vaujour had, before long, led to disputes between the two noblemen. Each complained of the bad faith of the other, and from words they came at last to blows.

The Duke was the first to declare war, and began it by invading with his forces the lands of his neighbour the Count, destroying crops, burning villages, and killing every person within reach.

Count Ralph, in order to retaliate upon the Duke, summoned his vassals; and Jehan, who had just lost his father by death, went armed to the appointed place.

The Count divided his men into several bands, that he placed under the respective command of as many leaders, to whom he had given secret instructions. Jehan belonged to the most numerous of these bands, and the direction it took was towards Clairai.

These vassals of Count Ralph marched in a

very disorderly manner, looking uneasily around at almost every step, as though they dreaded an ambush, and often asking one another, in a low tone of voice, what could be the object of this expedition. Jehan, who was almost the last man, was suddenly addressed by a person who was a fisherman on the Count's property, and, as a vassal, was forced to take up arms.

'Do you know what they are going to do with us?' asked he in a loud whisper.

'Nothing good, I fear,' replied Jehan.

'I have some idea that we are going to serve Clairai in the same manner that the Duke of Vaujour served our villages.'

'What would be gained by doing so? We should only injure relations and friends.'

'True, young man,' replied the fisherman; 'but how can we help it? The vassal is obliged to take up arms when his lord commands him.'

'Yes,' said Jehan; 'and if he refuse he would be punished as a coward and felon. He is not master of his own feelings and movements. At a signal, at the word of command, his neighbour

of yesterday must become the enemy of to-day, and this without knowing the reason why. He must strike whenever and wherever he is ordered !'

'Happily, I have no one related or connected to me on the estate of Vaujour,' answered the fisherman.

'Neither have I just now any one exposed to any danger, I hope,' replied Jehan.

'But I thought that your cousin Kate was there.'

'She is in the service of the Duke's daughter, and lives in the castle, where there is nothing to fear at present.'

'You are mistaken, Jehan,' said a voice behind him.

The young man turned quickly round and beheld Master Moreau.

'Kate is no longer in the castle,' continued the steward.

'How do you know it?' exclaimed Jehan.

'From spies who have been on the Vaujour estate. She went a few days ago to her mother, who was ill.'

‘I will run to her mother’s house, where she is!’ exclaimed Jehan.

‘It is useless.’

‘Why?’

‘One of our bands is there already, with orders to burn and destroy everything and every one.’

‘Can it be possible?’

‘You would arrive too late. Look!’

Jehan gazed in the direction pointed out. Smoke and flames were to be seen in the distance.

The young man uttered a cry, and, darting away, rushed as fast as he could in the direction of the fire.

He soon came in sight of the huts in flames, and he thought he could hear shrieks. By frantic efforts he quickly traversed the space that separated him from the burning place, and arrived at the door of the hut of Kate’s mother.

The flames had just begun to run along the thatch of the roof. Jehan, breathless and bewildered, rushed into the dwelling; but in entering it his feet splashed into a pool of blood,

and directly afterwards he fell over a corpse stretched on the floor.

It was that of Kate !

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One month afterwards, Jehan assumed the dress of a novice in the religious establishment of the Franciscans at Tours.

One day, when he was in the grounds of the monastery for the first time after his arrival, a monk came up to him, and asked if he remembered him. It was the same individual who was a novice when Jehan first visited the monastery, and had advised him at the time to enter it. Remarking the pale, sad, and sorrow-worn countenance of the other, the young monk shook his head.

‘Alas!’ said he, ‘I can see that you have met with many and severe trials during the course of your past life.’

‘And after these great trials I have discovered, as you told me formerly, that here only is peace to be found on earth,’ answered Jehan. ‘Everywhere else serfage leaves, as yet, an end of the

chain to be dragged about during life. Here only is deliverance; here only can the dignity of manhood be maintained by one who has been a serf.'

'True to some extent,' said the monk; 'but do not expect too much from any earthly institution—even from a monastery. The times are such, that all have to submit to some description of force or oppression. In the world outside, earthly superiors violently lord it over God's heritage. In the church and cloister ecclesiastical superiors lord it over the consciences of their inferiors. The time will come, for the Lord has declared it in the Holy Scriptures, that men and their consciences shall enjoy true liberty. The prophecies, that a happier period than these feudal times shall come, are too clear to be doubted. We may be in our graves, and never see the fulfilment of these prophecies. All we can do is to watch and pray.'

'Alas!' said Jehan, 'why, then, are we come upon earth too soon? Is it not afflicting that we have to rear, as it were, with tears and blood

the edifice which those who come after us are to enjoy?’

‘You do not reflect, my brother,’ replied the monk, ‘upon all that those suffered who have gone before us, and prepared the way for the benefits which we enjoy. Believe me, they were more cruelly tried than this generation is. The primitive Christians, who held fast and proclaimed, amid times of persecution, oppression, violence, and slavery, the grand doctrines of the gospel, suffered more than we do. They believed firmly in the promise of our Saviour: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” How many of these Christians were torn to pieces by wild beasts, or tortured, or stoned, or beaten to death, before the progress of Christianity had tamed the ferocity of mankind to allow the slave of ancient time to emerge into the serf, the serf into the villein, and the villein into the freeman of our days! Do not accuse Providence; but admire, on the contrary, how Providence has given to each generation its work, to each age its progress. The slave had for-

merly scarcely any other refuge than the grave ; the serf at present can often raise himself in the social scale, so as to find an asylum from the storms of life in a religious retreat like this. Do not complain, my brother, but direct your thoughts rather to the example of the God-man of Calvary, who went about doing good. There is much in the world that needs the labours of Christian men to reform.'

'But how can it be done?' asked Jehan.

'By preaching the word of God,' answered the monk ; 'though, alas ! even this good and necessary work is fettered in these evil times. Let us loudly and constantly proclaim with St. Peter, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."*' The rich and powerful, as well as the poor, cannot much longer continue to resist the influence of the word of God. Already the nobles are extending every day the freedom of those in servitude, and this from Christian motives, until—as the consciences of mankind become more and more alarmed at the rebellion

* Acts x. 34.

against Christian charity—serfage and all the other forms of slavery will gradually disappear, and the glorious light of the gospel will dispel this darkness and many another darkness from the minds of mankind.’

‘Ah! may God grant that it may be so,’ exclaimed Jehan; ‘and may He grant me faith and strength to be a labourer in His vineyard.’

‘You can easily become so, with the help of the Lord,’ answered the monk, ‘as you are soon to put on the dress of some of the labourers—the monk’s frock and cowl.’

‘And you think that success will attend the efforts that Christians are making to improve the condition of mankind?’

‘I rely upon the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ said the monk solemnly: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” *

* Matt. xi. 28-30.

As your Latin Testament says, "*Beati qui lugent quoniam ipsi consolabuntur*;" they mean, as you well know, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." * And the time may come when the word of God will be translated into the language of each country, and the prophecy of Habakkuk will be fulfilled: "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." †

* Matt. v. 4.

† Hab. ii. 14.



THE FREEMAN.


'Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains, beneath her happy reign,
The growth that nature meant she should attain ;
The varied fields of science, ever new,
Opening, and wider opening, on her view.
She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
While no base fear impedes her in her course.
Religion, richest favour of the skies,
Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes ;
No shades of superstition blot the day,
Liberty chases all that gloom away ;
The soul, emancipated, unoppress'd,
Free to prove all things, and hold fast the best,
Learns much ; and to a thousand listening minds
Communicates with joy the good she finds.'

COWPER.



CHAPTER I.

THE WIDOW AND HER SONS.

NE of those miserable scenes which poverty so often brings with it, took place, about the middle of January 18—, in one of the most wretched houses in a suburb of Mühlhausen.

In a garret exposed to all the winds, and into which the cold air entered through the broken window-panes, a woman about forty years of age was lying on a tattered bed : her ghastly face showed that her life was coming to an end. Mrs. Kossmall, for such was the name of the dying woman, was a widow who had struggled for several years against extreme misery, and had suffered the greatest privations. She had worn out a frame, naturally strong, by hard work,

which would require almost more than human strength to perform. At the death of her husband she was left to support two children, the elder of whom was scarcely four years old. It had been only by the most exhausting labour that she had been able to bring up her fatherless children.

She had passed through successive stages of miserable poverty, each worse than the other, often having had to wait until the morrow for the pittance she had earned, when she wanted it at the time to buy food to satisfy the cravings of hunger of herself or her family. She had felt for a time that her strength was giving way ; but when it entirely left her, and she was utterly unable to work, the greater number of the persons who employed her, indifferent as to the cause of what they called her want of industry, ceased to give her any more work. If she had been encouraged and helped, the poor woman might have recovered from her illness ; but, left unaided in this manner, it was impossible for her to struggle on any longer.

One evening, on entering her garret in a more depressed state than usual, she glanced at the empty shelves of the closet and the fireless hearth, and said to Frederick, the younger of her two sons:

‘My boy, God may perhaps have mercy upon me, for I feel very ill. You are an industrious boy. Your employer likes you. When he knows that you and your brother are in want of everything, he will not refuse to advance you some of your wages. I know that it is very unpleasant to ask it; but you have a good spirit, Frederick, and if you pray to God, He will incline the heart of your master to help you.’

Frederick looked at his mother with anxiety. They had often been in want of food, but she had never before spoken to him in this manner. He was alarmed at her paleness and exhaustion. Nevertheless he restrained the tears that were coming into his eyes, and approaching her he persuaded her to lie down, and told her that he would go to Mr. Kartmann, his employer.

His master complied with his request, but the

advance of wages which he obtained scarcely sufficed to provide the common necessities of life, and the poor family was soon again in a state of destitution.

On the 20th of January the garret of the widow Kosmall was even colder than usual. Not a spark of fire was to be seen in the stove. No one had thought of food or fire, for the mother lay on her deathbed. Her last hour had nearly come. A clergyman was beside her, speaking words of consolation from God's holy book, and praying with her. Her own mind was at peace; but she had told the good pastor of her anxiety about her boys, and he had reminded her of God's promises, and told her to trust in Him who is the 'Father of the fatherless.'

The widow's two sons were kneeling beside her. Frederick appeared overcome with grief; Francis, the elder of them, wept also, but his tears were occasioned by the passing feelings of the moment; and even amidst this affliction it was easy to perceive a certain amount of indifference and want of feeling.

After the clergyman had gone, the dying woman tried to sit up in bed, and made signs to her two children to listen to her with attention ; and then, stretching out her feeble arms, she took a hand of each of her sons, and gently drew them close to her.

‘I am going home, my darlings,’ said she, ‘to the heavenly home of which I have often spoken to you. I am going to be with my Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom I trust. For me it is better to depart and to be with Christ ; yet, for your sakes, I would wish to be spared on earth a little longer. But the Lord knows best what is good for us. His holy will be done!’

Her strength failed ; she lay down for a few moments silent, and then spoke again :

‘I can leave you nothing, my darling boys, but a mother’s blessing, and her last advice. I entreat you to remember my words. You will soon be orphans—you will have no mother to think for you or care for you ; but remember that you have still a Father in heaven, who has promised to be especially a Father to the father-

less. Trust in Him. When you are in trouble, pray to Him to help you, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake ; for He has said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." You will have to suffer many hardships, for you are very young to be dependent on yourselves ; but I trust that He who "feedeth the young ravens when they cry,"* will raise up friends to help you when I am gone. But no earthly friend can help you, unless you strive to do your duty. Be honest and industrious. I have always tried to set you a good example. You know that I have suffered want rather than steal, though when I was at work I might have taken what belonged to others, when we were starving.

'You like work, my dear Fred ; and young as you are, only thirteen, you are very industrious, and I know you to be honest. Do not be hurt, my dear Francis, if I say that I am more anxious about you. I don't want to reproach you for the past, but let me advise you

* Psalm cxlvii. 9.

for the future. A good character is your only fortune, and it is by honest industry that you can do your duty and keep yourself respectable. Any poor person who has not sufficient industry and perseverance to continue working day by day to gain an honest livelihood, runs a great risk of becoming a thief. Watch over yourself, my dear Francis, and try to conquer your habits of idleness. Remember what is said in God's word: "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." And, again, the Apostle Paul says: "When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

'I hope that you two brothers will always remain together. Do not leave Fred, my dear Francis; your brother is your natural companion and friend. Listen to him when he gives you good advice. Do not be angry when he tells you to do what is right, though he is younger

than you. He will not speak with any intention to vex you, and he will not pride himself in superior wisdom, so as in any way to hurt your feelings. He knows that wisdom is the gift of God,—a gift for which we have to be thankful, not proud.'

Then, pressing the hand of Francis, which she had continued to hold, the mother again spoke to him.

'Promise me that you will never leave your brother, and that you will never live anywhere away from him, and so lose the only tie of family affection that is now left to you.'

The feelings of Francis were touched for the moment by what his mother said. He wept, and promised faithfully to follow his mother's advice. This seemed to satisfy her, for her face was lighted up by a passing gleam of joy.

'I die in peace,' said she, 'trusting in my Saviour. Oh, my dear children, do not forget all that I have done and suffered for you. Be united all your lives, as you have ever been united in my affection.'

Then, placing her cold hands on their young heads, which were bent towards her, she murmured a few words. Her voice was so faint that the boys kneeling beside her could not hear what she said. Her last words were known only to God, who sees and knows all things.

Soon afterwards she gently slept away.

The remains of the poor woman were followed to the grave by the two orphans and the good clergyman.





CHAPTER II.

THE ORPHANS—FRANCIS AND FREDERICK.

LEFT thus to themselves, the brothers at once began to follow two different paths of conduct. Francis, whom the death of his mother had troubled, chiefly because of the absence of one who attended to him and loved him, was sometimes very sad. A fickle heart like his could not find any other way of escaping from his sorrow than in noisy amusements.

The day after he had followed his mother to the grave he went with some lads of his own age to slide upon the ice. Fred understood his duty in a different manner. The first outburst of grief over, he determined to follow the advice of his deceased mother, by working

hard. He returned to the workroom, his eyes red, his face pale, his heart sad, but resolute. His employer, Mr. Kartmann, stopped as he was passing by him in the course of the day.

‘You have stayed away for several days,’ said he to him severely. ‘Will you give up this unpunctual habit?’

‘I was attending to my sick mother, sir.’

‘Is she better now?’

‘She is dead, sir,’ replied Frederick, bursting into tears.

Mr. Kartmann uttered an exclamation of surprise.

‘My poor boy!’ said he, ‘when did she die?’

‘Three days ago.’

‘You may go home, Fred, and not return until the end of the week, when you will receive your wages the same as though you had worked,’ said his employer in a feeling tone and manner.

‘Thanks, sir,’ answered Fred. ‘If my mother were alive now, and could see what I am doing,

nothing would give her greater pleasure than to see me at work. She told me to be industrious; so, to obey her last wishes, I will stay here and work on.'

Mr. Kartmann patted the orphan boy on the back, as a sign of his being greatly pleased, and said, 'I will place you among the apprentices, Fred, and I will increase your wages.'

Nevertheless the zeal of the orphan was not limited to labour in the workroom only. Mr. Kartmann announced that he was going to form an evening class, which was to meet in his premises, and which was to be composed of his apprentices who had no time to attend the public schools. This news filled Fred with joy.

It was the first opportunity that had presented itself to him of getting some education. Many a time he had heard his late mother lament the state of ignorance from which her children seemed to have no chance of escaping, and he readily understood, from what he had noticed, the great usefulness of education; so, when the 15th of February arrived—the evening of which

day the class was to open—he went to the work-room more disposed than ever to persevere in labour, and with his mind full of good resolutions. During the whole of the day he looked forward to the evening as a reward given for his industry, and never before did his labour seem lighter to him.

Born in a manufacturing town, he had been placed at seven years of age before a machine which he was so accustomed to see working, that he had never taken the trouble to inquire about anything beyond what was necessary for his own work. Thus, although he was the most industrious boy in the establishment, he was, in reality, in a state of profound ignorance as to general knowledge, and he felt it to be a very hard task to fix his attention upon his dry lessons. His thoughts would often wander from the subject he had to study, and his memory, from want of use, often failed him.

In time, however, he succeeded in overcoming these difficulties,—the results of his neglected education during childhood,—and by dint of a

determination to get on, and not to be beaten in the struggle, he managed to overcome his dislike to learning, and became a very good scholar, so far as was taught him in the class.

Fred and his brother Francis had for some time left the miserable garret in which their mother died, and were now boarding with a Mrs. Ridler, an old friend of their late mother. In her more comfortable sitting-room Fred applied himself to study at night, to prepare his lessons for the next evening. This determined perseverance could not fail to bring its own reward, and in course of time Fred was able to read and write. During this time he wished to give some lessons to Francis, who did not work in the same factory; but all his offers and entreaties were in vain.

‘Of what use would it be for me to know how to read and write, to help me to spin cotton?’ Francis would answer.

Fred was at last obliged to cease trying to overcome the idleness of his brother. Two years passed away, during which Mr. Kartmann again

increased the wages of Fred, who went on steadily with his lessons. When at his studies at night, he often fell asleep after the hard work of the day; but imitating, without knowing it, the example of an ancient philosopher, he got old Mrs. Ridler, who sat up until eleven o'clock, to awaken him whenever she found him asleep.

The course of instruction in the class at Mr. Kartmann's factory did not teach anything beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic. Fred wished to learn geometry, as it was, as he knew, necessary if he sought to succeed in the higher branches of his trade. Unfortunately, he had no book on this subject, and he could not afford to purchase it and the requisite mathematical instruments. At length, on one of the anniversaries of the birthday of Mr. Kartmann, when all his workpeople and apprentices went to congratulate him, he called Fred to him, and then put a piece of gold into the lad's hand.

'Take this,' said he; 'it is the prize I give to the most studious scholar in the evening class. I am glad that you have gained it.'

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A piece of gold! It was more than Fred had ever expected or thought of in his fondest dreams. The poor lad was so transported with joy, that his only anxiety was how to express his gratitude in a proper manner.


Two hours afterwards he was in the small garden attached to the house of Mrs. Ridler, and was seated on a bench engaged in turning over the leaves of the books placed on his knees. What numberless hopes, what innumerable plans for the future, passed through his mind! He was happy for the first time.





CHAPTER III.

THE KIND BROTHER.

NE summer evening when Fred, after having quitted the factory in which he worked, was seated, according to his usual habit, in Mrs. Ridler's garden, for the purpose of studying in quietness, his thoughts naturally turned, when the failing light forced him to cease using his books, to a subject which most deeply concerned him. He asked himself for the hundredth time what had become of his brother for the last fifteen days that he had not seen him. He remembered with grief some of the last words of his mother: 'Be then united during this life as you have been united in my love and affection.'

Even in this sorrow he felt one consolation

remained to him,—he had the self-satisfaction that he had neglected nothing in order to comply with the dying wishes of his parent. Not only had he aided Francis with his advice, but he had stinted himself in many ways to be able to help him. Alas! he now saw that all these self-sacrifices were in vain, and that there are persons who care nothing for the closest and the most sacred ties of family affection. These thoughts made him very sad. Contrary to his usual way, he did not feel impatient for Mrs. Ridler to light her lamp, so that he could pursue his studies; but, made restless by anxiety, he paced up and down the short walks in the little garden.

Suddenly a well-known voice spoke to him in cautious tones. Fred turned sharply round, and beheld Francis, whose ragged clothes, haggard countenance, and fatigued appearance showed very plainly how he had passed his time during his absence.

His brother looked at him for some moments with a mingled expression of sorrow and pity;

but, pained at the sight, and fearful of giving offence, he did not ask a single question.

Francis, whose careless, unfeeling character made him indifferent about the feelings of his brother, was the first to break the silence.

‘You find me a good deal changed, don’t you?’ said he in a voice which showed vexation, not remorse; ‘but I’ve had rather a long trip since I left you, and have had more than once to go without my meals, and go supperless to sleep.’

‘What has kept you away so long from home?’ asked Fred with hesitation.

‘The best of all reasons: I was tired of working in a cotton-mill. The overseer saw that I had no great relish for that sort of work, so he said something about me to the master, who politely sent me about my business a fortnight ago.’

‘That is a great misfortune for us, who have nothing but what we earn to depend upon; but that was no good reason why you should have disappeared in the way you did.’

‘I feared that old Mrs. Ridler would not keep me when she found that I was out of work.’

‘At my request, she might have let you stay with her; besides, you have known for many a long day that I have a loaf and a home to share with you.’

‘Yes; but I expected also a share of sermons from you at the same time, and I won’t have any more of them; besides, I wanted to see a little of the world, so I took a trip to Switzerland. I was told that it is a beautiful country, and that one can live there for nothing—which just suited a fellow in my position. But the Swiss are brutes! When I asked them for a morsel to eat, they told me that I was old enough to gain my own living, as if it were worth one’s while to leave one’s own country to go and work elsewhere.’

‘I believe there is no country,’ replied Fred seriously, ‘where poor people are not obliged to work; and I do not look upon this necessity of labouring honestly as an evil, but it is a still greater evil for poor people to refuse to work.’

‘It is all very well for you to talk,’ answered Francis,—‘you who pass for being so wise and good. As for me, I was born to be rich ; and the sooner people give me what is my due, the better for them.’

‘Listen,’ replied Fred. ‘There are some things all very well when said as a joke ; but you yourself must know that your complaints about your position in life will not mend it, and that you must put up with it, such as it is. Those who from sickness or other causes are unable to work, may have reason to complain ; but those who are well and strong, ought to labour willingly and easily.’

‘Have I not told you,’ replied Francis in a cross tone of voice, ‘that I have been sent away from the factory ? Of what use, then, would it be for me to like work, now that I have none to do ?’

‘There are other factories in Mühlhausen besides the one you were working in, and, if you really wish it, you could find employment.’

‘Yes ; and go from door to door, I suppose,

asking whether they will give me work. A nice sort of employment that !'

'You would find it more to your taste, perhaps, to go begging about the streets: however, as you object to ask for work, I will save you the trouble. I will speak to Mr. Kartmann to-morrow, and he may perhaps consent to take you into his factory. Will this suit you?'

'I suppose that it *must* suit me.'

Fred did not wish to keep up any longer this unpleasant conversation, besides which, Francis seemed fatigued; so he asked him to go in-doors.

Mrs. Ridler did not receive her vagabond boarder in a very gracious manner. She was astonished at his assurance in returning to her, and told him to seek a lodging elsewhere; but Fred interceded for his brother, and at last got her permission that he might share his supper and bed with him.

Thus Francis already felt the good effects of Fred's influence, which served to protect him from the results of his bad conduct.

The night was passed in a very different

manner by the two brothers. The elder slept soundly, careless about the morrow; whilst the rest of Fred was disturbed by many anxious thoughts: he dreaded the manner in which Mr. Kartmann would receive his request.

The next morning he went with Francis to his employer, and explained to him in a faltering voice the motive of his visit. He wished to conceal the bad conduct of his brother, but when Mr. Kartmann asked the reason why his brother had left the factory in which he had been working, Fred told all, as he would not be guilty of falsehood.

‘All this is very bad,’ said the proprietor of the factory, shaking his head. ‘Nevertheless,’ he added, turning to Francis, ‘I will admit you into my establishment; but do not forget that it is for the sake of your younger brother, whose example I advise you to follow.’

This morning, the same as on the previous evening, it was to the good services of a younger brother that Francis was indebted; but the heart of the elder brother was dead to all feelings of

self-respect, and he was not in the least pained at this change of proper positions—of the elder not helping the younger, but the younger helping the elder. When they were alone together on the stairs, Francis even said in a flippant tone to Fred:

‘It appears that you are a person of some influence here. You have but to ask and have. In future I shall know to whom to apply.’

‘I do my duty, and confidence is placed in me,’ replied Fred: ‘this is the whole secret of my influence.’





CHAPTER IV.

A PLOT DISCOVERED.

SEVERAL months passed away without bringing any change in the respective situations of the two brothers. The elder, although he was not very diligent in the service of Mr. Kartmann, had not as yet deserved any serious reprimand. As for Fred, the qualities which had brought him under the notice of his employer, became every day more marked and developed. His intelligence, increased by the instruction that he had acquired by dint of perseverance, placed him above the other apprentices of his age ; and the conscientious manner in which he performed the work entrusted to him, made his services almost as valuable as those of a man. He was employed in the calico-printing depart-

ment of Mr. Kartmann's immense factory, in which all the various processes of cotton-spinning, weaving, and printing were performed; and he often admired the engraved blocks, cylinders, rollers, etc., by means of which plain calico is covered with elegant-coloured patterns. This attentive observation ended by leading him to cherish a strong desire, and to indulge in a vague hope: it was to be received into the engraving department. To learn this branch of his trade, soon became the dream of his existence.

Without exactly knowing how he could carry out his plan, he liked to think how, at some time or other, he should change his present position for that of an engraver, as he had the laudable ambition to improve his condition in life by perseverance and industry. At first he thought of asking his employer to allow him to devote a part of his time to learning the branch of the trade which he wished to know, but he was afraid to solicit such a favour. His experience, however, convinced him that many things, apparently impossible, may be accomplished by a firm will.

He resolved to go to the engraving department during dinner-time, and to work there quietly. A young apprentice in this branch, whom he had taken into his confidence, showed him how to use the requisite tools; and at the end of some time Fred was able to engrave tolerably well any pattern that was not very complicated.

He went thus for several months regularly to the engraving-room, without anybody noticing how he passed his spare time. His fellow-workers were so little accustomed to have him as a companion in their amusements, that none of them thought of inquiring the reason why he was so often absent. It is even probable that Fred might have succeeded in his plan without having attracted the notice of any one whom he did not wish to know it, had not an event which took place during the middle of that winter completely changed his plans, and given an entirely new direction to the course of his life.

One day when he had, as was his custom, entered the engraving-room at dinner-time, and was already at work, he heard the sounds of

unusual footsteps, which caused him to feel very uncomfortable, as he was in the room without leave. He rushed as fast as he could behind a pile of articles that had often hidden him before on similar occasions, as he had always a dread of being found out. This pile, in its turn, quite prevented him seeing anything that was taking place in the room ; nevertheless, from the movements he heard, he was sure that several persons had entered. At first he merely thought that he should have to remain hidden for a short time until these persons left, but, after a few minutes, the precautions which he heard them taking, and the half-whispers in which they were speaking, alarmed him.

‘Have you shut the door quite close?’ said one of the men.

‘Look into the closet to see if anybody is in it,’ said another.

‘Why are they so fearful of being surprised?’ thought Fred, with terror ; and he was almost frightened to breathe. He felt that it was not chance which had brought all this about, but that

Providence, for some wise reason, had ordained he should be on this spot at this moment. Never before had he felt such anxiety.

When the new-comers thought themselves secure from all interruption and discovery, one of the party spoke, and, in a low but very distinct voice, and also in tones that showed the importance which the speaker attached to his words, explained the plan he had devised.

This plan was nothing less than to force open, during the middle of the night, the window of the counting-house of Mr. Kartmann, and carry off the cash-box. Fred discovered, from some remarks which were made, that those who formed this plot were workpeople belonging to the factory, and he could scarcely restrain a movement of horror; but, remembering that it was of the utmost importance to become acquainted with all the details of the affair, he remained, if possible, more motionless than before.

What each thief was to do, was then arranged.

‘One of us,’ said the man who had previously

explained the plot, 'will first get into the counting-house through the broken window. Let us see who is the smallest among us. It must be Francis.'

At the mention of this name, Fred could not help shuddering dreadfully ; but when he heard the voice of his brother reply to the instructions which were given, he could not help uttering, notwithstanding all his efforts to the contrary, an exclamation of agony and sorrow.

There was a sudden silence among the workmen.

'What place did that noise come from ?' asked one.

'From somewhere in this room.'

'There is some one here, then.'

The search did not last long, and Fred was soon dragged out and surrounded by the conspirators, one of whom asked him why he had concealed himself. He briefly explained why.

'You must have heard all that we said ?'

'Yes,' replied Fred.

A discussion then arose among the workmen

what they should do to the lad. They cursed and threatened him, and even went so far as to say that the surest way to get rid of him was to murder him; but this last proposal, which was partly made to frighten him, had the effect of making him feel determined, if not calm. It was agreed at last that he was to be shut up somewhere, to make sure of his silence until the morrow. The difficulty was to find a suitable place. One of the workmen proposed a garret which he occupied in the building. He stated that it was in a part of the premises which was not used for business purposes, and had one small window, under which was a yard seldom entered by any one. This suggestion was adopted. They hurried Fred up a staircase, along a narrow passage of great length, and then, pushing him into the garret, locked the door.

It would be impossible to describe his grief when left to himself; he carefully inspected his prison, and found that he could not discover any means by which he could escape.

He threw himself upon a chair, and remained

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for some time in a state of complete despair, then, rising from his seat, he wildly paced the apartment. Thoughts passed rapidly through his brain. He would have almost sacrificed his life to be able to warn Mr. Kartmann of the danger which threatened him, and to prevent Francis committing the crime which he intended. He knew that his benefactor and his brother were about to be placed in a frightful position, the one towards the other, without his being able to warn the one and save the other.

Several hours elapsed that were passed in this despairing manner. At last a kind of fever, produced by his agonized state of mind, seized him, and, notwithstanding the extreme cold of winter, he felt his face and forehead hot and flushed. He opened the window, and leaned out of it, hoping that the air would refresh him. He remained for a long while in the same position, watching vacantly the clouds that passed across the sky; then, after having glanced at all surrounding objects, his gaze at last was fixed upon a chimney-pot on a stack of chimneys be-

longing to one of the wings of the building. For some time he amused himself by following with his eyes the wreaths of smoke issuing from it.

All at once the lad felt a thrill of satisfaction pass through his mind,—he leaned forward and looked anxiously. He could not doubt it,—the smoke proceeded from the chimney of Mr. Kartmann's private room.

He hurriedly left the window; and, thankful for the fortunate habit he had of always carrying writing materials about him, he wrote a note, in which he briefly informed Mr. Kartmann of that which he had discovered, and also mentioned where he was confined as a prisoner.

His note finished, he went again to the window. The building, like all those which are used as cotton-factories, was very high. For a few minutes Fred gazed down at the great height as though he were measuring it with his eye, but his resolution was not changed by the examination.

Often, whilst at play when a boy, he had

climbed trees and run along roofs. He was active and bold; in addition to which, there was an absolute necessity to risk everything in the attempt. He mounted on the ledge of the window, which, being that of a garret, was close to the roof; he then managed to make his way along the roof, and climbed up the steep and slippery slope—the most difficult part of his progress—that led to the chimney itself. Wishing to attract the attention of the clerks and others who were in Mr. Kartmann's room, he dropped hard pieces of mortar, which he had loosened with his knife, one by one down the chimney; then, when he thought it was time, he let drop his note, securely fastened between two pieces of tile, in order to protect it from the soot and fire. This done, he quickly went back to his garret.

He expected an immediate deliverance, but hours passed away and nobody came. The public clocks had struck five. He went frequently to the door, he peeped through the keyhole, he put his ear close to it, but nothing was to be



THE FREEMAN.

Page 292.

seen or heard in the passage. He began to feel very uneasy. Whence arose this delay? Had his note been read? All the agony of mind that he had previously felt now returned.

At last, when night was coming on, he thought that he heard the sound of light and cautious footsteps. A key turned gently in the lock.

It was a horrible moment of suspense for the youth, as it might be the conspirators instead of some one sent by Mr. Kartmann.

The key was taken out of the lock without the door having been opened, and a second attempt, made apparently with another key, did not succeed any better.

Fred felt relieved at the thought that some one was trying strange keys. It could not be the thievish workmen, who were, he feared, wicked enough to murder him. *They* had the right key.

At length, after repeated trials, the door turned softly on its hinges, and the lad recognised the voice of Mr. Kartmann, who spoke to him.

‘Come out!’ said his employer, taking him by the hand. ‘Keep silent, whatever you do . . . It must not be suspected that you have got out.’ Then, conducting him along some dark passages, they reached Mr. Kartmann’s room.





CHAPTER V.

THE BURGLARS.

MR. KARTMANN having left the room to make sure that all the measures to be put into operation were being properly prepared, Fred was left alone. He wished much to see his brother; but what excuse could he make for quitting the apartment, or where could he find Francis? At one time he thought of confessing all to his employer, but Francis might have changed his mind, and might have given up all intention of taking any part in the proposed crime: in this case, Fred felt that any confession would only uselessly injure Francis. The poor lad therefore resolved to await events, and put his trust in the mercy of God.

Mr. Kartmann returned at last. All was prepared to prevent the robbery. The clerks and

several overseers of the factory were concealed about the yard into which the windows of the counting-room looked, and these men were sufficiently numerous to seize hold of and overpower the thieves. Mr. Kartmann conducted Fred to the counting-room; the lad followed him in silence, hoping that some opportunity would occur when he could be useful to Francis, if he should come to the place. About an hour elapsed, during which there were no signs of the approach of the thievish workmen. It was an hour of horrible torture to Fred, who started at the slightest sound. The darkness and silence which reigned in the apartment forcibly impressed him with the gravity of the situation, and chilled him with horror.

The trial was almost more than the strength of a youth could support. He was quite exhausted by the events of this frightful day, and he felt that his heart was almost broken; but it seemed more than he could bear without fainting, when, just as the clock was striking one, a slight noise, made with a tool, warned him that

some one was trying to force open the shutters. Mr. Kartmann also heard the noise, and approached the window. Fred rose almost mechanically from his chair, then sank upon his seat, not knowing what to do. This agonizing suspense lasted for some time. The burglars, fearful of making a noise, worked gently and slowly to force the shutter to open, and it was only after long efforts that this was accomplished. At the same instant fragments of broken glass fell upon the floor, and Mr. Kartmann gave a shrill whistle. The scuffling and noise which followed proved that the order given by the signal was obeyed. Shouts and cries were heard soon afterwards, and then the report of a pistol. At this sound Mr. Kartmann rushed from the room. Fred had until then felt unable to move. The peculiar noise made by some one trying to squeeze his body through the broken window suddenly aroused him from his stupefaction, and then Francis stood before him.

‘Wretched young man!’ exclaimed he; ‘what are you doing here?’

‘Save me!’ said Francis wildly to him. ‘Save me, Fred!’

‘How can I?’

A thought flashed across him. He remembered that there was a door in the room which led into the garden; he felt for it in the dark, found it, dragged Francis after him, and ran with him towards a part of the garden wall that was the lowest.

‘Go!’ exclaimed he, after he had explained to his brother the way he was to take. ‘Do not stay in Mühlhausen, whatever else you do. Your accomplices are in custody. They will inform upon you.’

‘Good-bye!’ said Francis on the top of the wall. He then disappeared.





CHAPTER VI.

FREDERICK'S REWARD.

ALL the guilty parties, with the exception of Francis, fell into the hands of justice. On the morrow Fred, according to orders, went to Mr. Kartmann's room. The manufacturer made him sit down, and, after having warmly thanked him, told him to ask, without any fear, what reward he would like to have for his good conduct. The youth hesitated at first, but Mr. Kartmann encouraged him to speak.

'I have then a great favour to ask you, sir,' said Fred in a faltering voice,—'which is, that you will allow me now and then to join in the lessons of your sons.'

'You shall join in them all to-morrow,' said

Mr. Kartmann. 'I have remarked for some time past that you have a laudable desire to instruct yourself, and I am persuaded that on account of this you will succeed in gaining a good position in the world. From what you told me yesterday, I suppose that you wish to be an engraver. I hope that in working at this you may eventually rise still higher.'

'Still higher than an engraver!' thought Frederick. Oh, what joy these words gave the poor orphan, until then struggling against difficulties with no other resources than his own patient efforts! He had at last found a protector, who spoke to him of reaching a better position in life, and offered to help him. His heart was so full of emotion at this new prospect, that he could only utter some confused words of gratitude; but he clasped his hands so expressively, and fixed his eyes upon Mr. Kartmann so feelingly, that the manufacturer understood from these signs all the gratitude that the youth could not express in words.

'You are a deserving lad, Frederick,' said he,

pressing his hand ; 'and I am sure that I shall never have to repent what I am now doing for you.'

The day after this interview, Mr. Kartmann introduced Fred to his sons and to their tutor. The service which he had just rendered to the family, the proof of the superiority of mind that he displayed even in the choice of his reward, spoke so strongly in his favour, that he was received in a most flattering manner by the tutor and his pupils. They highly praised Fred's laudable ambition. Every one gladly tried, and made it a point of duty, to assist the apprentice as much as possible in his studies.

The habit that Frederick had now got into, of fixing his whole attention upon any subject that he was for the time engaged in, was as useful to him in his new studies as it had been previously. This method, joined to the determination of always thoroughly understanding the reason of everything step by step as he went along, admirably prepared his understanding to master the difficulties in acquiring a knowledge of mathe-

matics and languages. Thus he made rapid progress in these two branches, without, however, interfering with his other work. History, geography, and drawing were not neglected,—mechanical drawing in particular,—and he was in time able to make drawings of the most complicated machinery.

After three years of instruction, Fred was as advanced in his studies as the sons of Mr. Kartmann. His fellow-students, who were younger than he was—one by two years, the other by four—were proud of his progress, and treated him more as a companion than as a person dependent in a great measure upon their father. If this good understanding arose partly from the good hearts of the youths, the conduct of Fred greatly contributed to maintain it. He was so modest about his acquirements, so civil and obliging, so truly grateful, and so careful not to ask any additional favours, that they would have blushed to make him feel his position.

When he had reached his nineteenth year, Mr. Kartmann promoted him to be one of the over-

seers in the factory. He was so sober and steady, that, though the style of his dress was superior to that of others of the same class in the establishment, he did not fail to save enough money with which to purchase books, mathematical instruments, and other articles required for his studies. It was a source of great satisfaction to him that he could now pay for these things, instead of continuing to receive them from his kind employer. He felt no longer uneasy about the future, whatever it might be. He now possessed resources which ought never to fail him, except that God in His wisdom should see fit to deprive him of them, or that, by the divine will, ill-health should come to make him unfit for work. He feared nothing else, for, humanly speaking, success seemed to be securely within his reach; and he trusted that God, who had thus far blessed and preserved him, would continue to do so.



CHAPTER VII.

A TEMPTATION.

IT was one of those hot, clear evenings which are so frequent at Mühlhausen: it was the hour when the workpeople leave the factories. Parties of them were ascending the rising ground that borders the canal, singing in chorus; and their songs were heard in the valley beneath.

Fred was seated with his drawing-board on his knees, engaged in making a drawing of some machinery that he had sketched during the day. He also liked singing and pleasant walks. When the air was beginning to be more refreshing at the close of a sultry day, he often felt, after a hard day's work, the wish to go and

wander amongst the vines, to breathe the fresh air ; but however harmless, however unobjectionable this pleasure was, he had very often the courage to resist it. On the evenings when the fineness of the weather invited him to remain out, he would often take his drawing materials and books, and seat himself to work and study on a small bench near Mrs. Ridler's door. There was a glimpse of the country to be seen from it—the air was fresher than in the house—the chirping, and occasionally the singing, of some birds in the neighbourhood might be heard ; and to him, accustomed as he was to pass his evenings thus quietly, these things, few as they were, afforded real pleasure.

On the evening we speak of, Fred was seated in his usual place. He was working diligently, as the light was failing, and he wished to finish the drawing he had commenced.

It was a sketch of one of the most complicated machines in Mr. Kartmann's factory. The breathing of some one who was looking over his shoulder caused him suddenly to suspend his work. He

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turned his head, and saw a stranger who was attentively looking at the drawing.

‘In which factory is this machine that you are making a drawing of?’ asked the stranger.

‘In Mr. Kartmann’s,’ replied Fred.

‘How did you manage to get a sketch of it?’

‘Mr. Kartmann allows me to study with his sons.’

‘Then you must have in your portfolio, drawings of most of the machinery in the establishment.’

‘Of nearly all, sir.’

‘I should like to see them.’

Fred obligingly opened his portfolio and showed his drawings to the stranger, who said, after he had minutely examined them :

‘I do not see among them a drawing of the large machine that Mr. Kartmann had from England two months ago.’

‘We are going to make a drawing of it in the course of a few days, sir.’

‘Do you think that you could give me copies of the drawings?’

‘I have not much time to spare ; nevertheless, to oblige you, I will try to make copies for you.’

‘I want, above all, a drawing of the new machine I have spoken to you about ; but as your time is of course valuable, I will pay you for your work. There!’ added he, holding out three pieces of gold coin, ‘I will give you these as payment in advance. We will afterwards come to terms about better payment.’

The sight of the gold startled Fred and aroused his suspicions. The stranger would not pay thus highly for drawings that he did not intend to use. These plans were doubtless required for the purpose of constructing machinery to be employed in competing with Mr. Kartmann, which competition might seriously hurt the trade of his employer, and do him immense injury. The youth shuddered at the thought of the harm he might do his employer by any imprudence on his part, and, hastily gathering his drawings together, he put them back into the portfolio, which he carefully fastened.

The stranger looked at him with astonishment, and held out to him once more the three pieces of gold.

‘Thanks,’ said Fred, ‘but I cannot accept your offer, sir. I now remember, that in doing so I should be disposing of property that does not belong to me, and I neither can nor will do such a thing. Apply to Mr. Kartmann himself; he will be better able to judge than I whether your proposal will be of any injury to him.’

The stranger perceived that Fred had guessed his intentions.

‘I understand,’ said he, ‘your motives for refusing my offer. You know that a manufacturer often tries to prevent other manufacturers from seeing and inspecting his machinery. You fear that if your employer were to discover that you had furnished me with drawings, he would dismiss you from his service; but I am able to make such a dismissal so advantageous to you that it will be a fortune to you. I offer you, from this moment, a situation in my factory at double the wages that you are receiving at pre-

sent, and I will also pay you whatever sum of money you may mention, whenever you deliver into my hands the drawings I have asked you to do for me.'

Fred would listen no longer; he snatched up his portfolio, and cast upon the stranger a look of mingled scorn and indignation.

'I can neither be guilty of treachery nor permit myself to be bribed, sir,' said he in a voice trembling with emotion. He then abruptly left the stranger and went into the house.

Some days after this scene, Mr. Kartmann called Fred into his office.

'Where are all the drawings that you did with my sons?' said he.

'In my portfolio, sir.'

'Bring them to me.'

Fred went and fetched his portfolio, which he gave to his employer, almost trembling as he did so, because there was something very brief and uneasy in Mr. Kartmann's manner that alarmed him.

Mr. Kartmann examined all the drawings:

the sight of every one of them caused him to utter an exclamation. 'What imprudence on my part!' muttered he. 'There is enough here to have half-ruined me.'

When he had finished his examination he turned towards Fred and said, 'Some one made an offer to buy copies of these drawings from you. I know it.'

'Yes, sir.'

'And you did not tell me of it.'

'I did not think it of sufficient importance to mention it to you.'

'What price was offered you?'

'Whatever I should like to ask.'

'And you refused?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Without hesitation?'

'To hesitate would have been infamous.'

'Your hand, Fred,' said Mr. Kartmann, holding out his own to the young workman. 'You have a noble heart. I am acquainted with the minutest details of this affair. I have acted very imprudently, my young friend, as any one less

honest than you are might have done me immense injury—more injury than I like to think of. I thank you for your straightforward, upright conduct. You are now no longer a lad: from all the reports I have received from your teachers, and from what I have observed myself, you ought not to remain an overseer any longer. From to-morrow you shall come and live in my house; you shall have a seat at my table, and continue to study with my sons. You shall also receive the usual pay of the situation you are to fill.'

On the morrow Fred quitted Mrs. Ridler's house. In bidding adieu to the kind-hearted old woman he could not help feeling a good deal affected, as his present happiness did not make him forget how kind she had been to him. He continued to show his gratitude for the services which she had rendered him, and he did not fail to visit his former landlady once a week, and bring some present with him.



CHAPTER VIII.

FREDERICK'S GRATITUDE.

SEVERAL years passed away without producing any particular changes in the condition of Fred. His abilities, which he continued to exert in studying science and art and in the pursuits of his trade, had become very marked, and his efforts were attended with complete success. The young workman, who twelve years ago did not know a single letter of the alphabet, was now considered by those who knew him, to be remarkably well instructed for his age.

Mr. Kartmann often congratulated himself upon having him in the establishment. Never before had the duties which he fulfilled been so faith-

fully and well done; therefore Mr. Kartmann did not consider him merely an ordinary clerk, but a friend of the family—the favourite companion of his sons, the clever and worthy competitor in their studies. The events that remain to be told only served to strengthen this confidence and affection, by showing to what extent they were well founded.

For several months Mr. Kartmann had appeared sad, and Fred, through whose hands the business accounts passed, began to perceive a certain amount of pecuniary embarrassment in the affairs of his employer. The confidential statements of Mr. Kartmann himself, the expressions showing uneasiness of mind that escaped him, the numerous applications from his creditors, soon enlightened Fred, and convinced him that all this did not arise from a temporary depression of trade, but from one of those changes in the course of trade which so often swallow up large fortunes. It was not long before Mr. Kartmann himself dispelled Fred's last doubts about the matter.

He came in one day at dinner-time more low-spirited than usual. When the meal was over, he asked his elder son and Fred to accompany him to his office.

‘Before two months are over,’ said he to them when in the office, ‘this establishment will no longer be mine. After its sale I shall have enough with which to pay my debts and liabilities; if I wait any longer, it will soon be beyond my means to meet them. The new machinery of Mr. Zinberger has completely ruined my trade. His goods are much better and cheaper than mine, and are preferred to mine in the market. For some time I have sustained this competition, however ruinous it has been, in the hope of improving my own machinery; but all my expectations on this point are at an end: to struggle any longer is impossible. As soon, then, as my books are balanced, I shall advertise these premises for sale. It is dreadful for me, I know, after so many years of industry, to see all my hopes vanish of making a competency for myself and children; but amidst all these ruined hopes

I find consolation in thinking that all my debts will be paid, and that I and my family will be the only sufferers from this measure. As for you, Frederick,' added he, stretching out his hand to the young man, 'you will not, I hope, cease to be our friend; but, as you perceive, we must part. I do not feel the slightest uneasiness about your future career. With your talents and good character you will be able to find employment elsewhere, only this separation will be another source of sorrow to me, as I am accustomed to look upon you as a third son.'

'I will not leave you, sir,' said Fred in a sad tone, 'until I shall have convinced myself that my services will be useless, and I hope that the day may be far distant when this will ever occur. Let us think over the state of your affairs, sir; perhaps the losses which you fear may be more imaginary than real. If I might presume to offer you my advice, I would counsel you not to be too hasty in coming to a decision. By waiting and watching, a remedy may often be found for these fluctuations in trade. You

may be able to get machinery similar to that of Mr. Zinberger.'

'His cotton-mill is a new one, with every recent improvement,' answered Mr. Kartmann. 'It would cost me more capital than I could invest at the present moment, to reconstruct my mill, considering the bad debts I have just now on my books, owing to the recent failures of several large firms. Some other manufacturers in this place are doing so, but they were always men with greater capital than I ever possessed. Even I might have purchased the requisite machinery for producing in perfection this new class of goods, if the heavy failures on the part of these bankrupt firms had not crippled my means. I fear that there is little hope for me,' concluded Mr. Kartmann, shaking his head; 'however, you will be a better judge of this question after you have examined my private books. They alone can give you an exact idea of my position and losses.'

So saying, he opened the books in question for the inspection of Fred, who looked over them

with a sinking heart. There were no errors in the figures. They showed only too plainly the cause of the disorder in Mr. Kartmann's affairs ; but even at this moment Fred was thinking of a remedy.

After having ended his painful interview with Mr. Kartmann, he went to his own room, and, quite bewildered, threw himself into an arm-chair.

'In two months,' said he, 'the business will be wound up, and it and the premises sold. In two short months! What is to be done? How is it possible, in so short a space of time, to carry out a plan to make Mr. Kartmann able to compete with his wealthy rivals in manufacturing these goods as cheaply and as well, and so save him from ruin, and his family from misery? Human aid seems hopeless ; we must trust in God, and ask His help.

'Thou, Lord, canst alone direct me, for the sake of the Saviour, what to do ; for earthly means, without Thy special blessing, seem to fail. O help me, O guide me in this matter,

for Thou, O Lord God, King of heaven and earth, art able to do mighty and wonderful things; and this is but a small matter for Thy almighty power to accomplish. Lord Jesus, Thou knowest how much I am indebted to this good man, who, as an instrument of Thy divine providence, has done much for me during my life!'

His thoughts being calmed by prayer, and by reliance upon God and his Saviour, Fred set steadily to work to consider how he could extricate Mr. Kartmann from his embarrassments.

From taste, as much as from the nature of his business, mechanics had been one of Fred's favourite studies, and he had now, it may be said, a thorough knowledge of this branch of the arts. During the years which he had been in Mr. Kartmann's dwelling he had met from time to time with various persons interested in the same pursuits, some of whom were strangers attracted to Mühlhausen by its fame as a manufacturing town. Among this number was a young man, a junior partner in a wealthy firm

of engineers and millwrights. He and Fred had been very intimate during his short stay at Mühlhausen, doubtless attracted to each other by a similarity of tastes and sentiments. They had occasionally, at long intervals, corresponded, but their intercourse was not sufficiently intimate to lead Fred to think of obtaining any advice respecting matters of business of this magnitude. One of these rare letters arrived just then from the young man. It flashed across the mind of Fred, directly he saw the handwriting, that a way was opened to him, by the leadings of Providence, by which he might see his way through the present difficulties. Had not the letter come at this time, he would never have thought of the plan. In fact he had, it might be said, forgotten for the moment the very existence of so slight an acquaintance. The young man, who thus occasionally corresponded with him, would be of all others the best able to help him. The firm to which the young partner belonged, manufactured mill-machinery on the most extensive scale. At first Fred thought of going

to Mr. Kartmann and suggesting to him to write to this firm, explaining his condition, and soliciting their advice and assistance. On second thoughts, Fred considered that it was safer to say nothing about it for the present to Mr. Kartmann, who most likely would only shrink from the idea of exposing the ruinous state of his affairs to strangers, who, after all, might in reply merely express their great regret at not being able to assist him under the peculiar circumstances.

Mr. Kartmann would naturally not feel inclined to make an exposure of the critical position of his business, if he were not first sure that the persons to whom he made it were inclined as well as able to be of use to him. Who could know this?

Fred would say nothing to Mr. Kartmann: he himself would write to his young acquaintance. He was not sure that he was doing right in thus informing a comparative stranger of Mr. Kartmann's affairs without permission; so, after he had written a letter, in which he fully explained

all, he was so perplexed what to do for the best, that he instinctively felt his only hope of seeing his way clearly, was to pray to God for help and support under the present trial. Comforted and refreshed by a short but fervent prayer, his mind was able to reflect calmly far better than before, when it was agitated and confused by the tumult of earthly thoughts and sorrows only. 'Let me be guided by the word of God in this matter,' said he to himself. 'Am I acting rightly? How am I to know? Easily. Let me think what rule God's word contains which applies particularly to any matter of the kind that I am now engaged in. Let me think of a suitable passage in Scripture. I have it!'

Fred took his Bible and searched for the passage he was thinking of. It was in Luke vi. 31: 'And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.'

Fred pressed his hand upon his brow, as if in intense thought. 'Let me argue calmly,' thought he, 'and according to this divine precept. If the affair were mine, should I like it exposed to other

people without my consent? No! It is clear, then, that I am not justified in mentioning Mr. Kartmann's name without his consent. This letter cannot go!' He reflected for some minutes. 'Shall I write at all? Yes. Shall I tell Mr. Kartmann? Yes. What does our Saviour say? Is it not to do to others as we would be done by?'

He went accordingly to Mr. Kartmann. 'I want your permission to write a letter to a friend, sir,' said he. 'Have I your sanction to explain how matters stand, without of course letting my friend know your name, or that it refers to you?'

'To whom do you wish to write?' replied his employer.

Fred told him.

'A very worthy young man, I believe. I have some slight recollection of him now that you mention his name. Well, he may be able to serve you by recommending you for some remunerative employment; but as for me, I fear that he can do me no good. However, you can try, my dear boy, so long as my name is not

used, for I have a great objection to have my misfortunes made known to strangers. I tell you frankly beforehand that I fear it is time and trouble thrown away. No, I am too deeply involved to be saved now, except by a fresh start with new machinery for the class of goods I manufacture.'

Mr. Kartmann sorrowfully shook his head, and Fred went to write his letter, with a clear conscience now that he was acting in a straightforward, conscientious manner, with no concealments from his employer.

'We are told by the Apostle Paul,' thought he, 'not to do evil that good may come' (Rom. iii. 8). 'It would have been mean and thoughtless, I may say wicked, as Mr. Kartmann's confidential clerk, to have exposed his affairs to a stranger without his consent. It is true I might have done it from a good motive, but good motives will not excuse neglect of God's word and disobedience to His precepts. How many wicked actions are done in this world under the plea of good motives! Oh, let us be guided by

the Bible instead of by merely good motives. In the word of God we shall find good motives, faith, satisfaction, help, and guidance, and all we require, all under one, without depending upon our own good motives, which being human, may as often lead us to act wrongly as rightly.'

Fred then rapidly wrote his letter. Without mentioning any names, he clearly explained the position in which matters stood, and asked his young friend what could be done under the circumstances to avert the impending ruin. The letter was posted, and Fred awaited the answer. As Mr. Kartmann said nothing more about the matter,—in fact he did not seem to consider it of the slightest importance, and had probably nearly forgotten it, absorbed as he was in his own affairs,—Fred did not allude to it. Day after day passed away, until there remained but a few days more before Mr. Kartmann would have to decide whether he would have to wind up his business or not. As the time drew nearer, Mr. Kartmann grew more and more gloomy and silent in his manner. Nevertheless, Fred, though

his hopes of help from his young acquaintance necessarily grew fainter, still hoped on, as he did not place reliance upon earthly sources only. He remembered the words in the forty-sixth Psalm, and often repeated them to himself, and found continual support and comfort in them: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.'

Whatever might be the result of affairs, he felt assured that all would be for the best. If disaster and ruin were to come, they would be necessary afflictions for the purpose of trial and correction to bring the sufferers nearer in heart and mind to the Saviour. At last a letter arrived—he knew the handwriting and post-mark. He glanced rapidly over the contents. It was a kind, yet business-like letter. It did not profess much, but the writer came to the point at once. 'I have consulted my senior partners on the matter you refer to; and although it is contrary to our usual system of business, and we would only do it in

a case recommended by a friend like you, for whom I have personally much esteem, we shall be happy to do all in our power to assist the worthy manufacturer whom you mention (you do not give his name), to the utmost of our ability, by furnishing him with suitable machinery, with all the latest improvements, for the purpose of enabling him to compete in the market with other manufacturers. In writing this, of course I take it for granted that your friend the manufacturer is, as you evidently believe him to be, a solid, respectable party. If it is, as I suspect (forgive me for writing so), somebody not a hundred miles off from Mr. Kartmann, if not Mr. Kartmann himself, from rumours in the trade which I had heard before the receipt of your letter, I and my partners will have additional pleasure in acting in this matter, and putting everything to rights on easy terms of payment, to suit his convenience.'

Fred thought for a moment that this good news must be an empty dream. Could it be possible that he, once a poor ignorant, almost

penniless boy, could now have influence to obtain credit for Mr. Kartmann for thousands of pounds sterling? But he checked himself. 'Let me not forget God, nor be ungrateful to Him,' said he to himself. 'I have never been friendless. There is a Friend, as God's word tells us, that sticketh closer than a brother (Prov. xviii. 24); and, in the darkest periods of my struggling life, this Friend, the blessed Saviour, has cared for me, and He will do so to the end.'

With these consoling thoughts, he hurried to the room of Mr. Kartmann.

'Read this, sir!' exclaimed he, holding out the letter to his employer. 'You will see that, by the blessing of God, my expectations have become realities, and have not proved empty dreams.'

As Mr. Kartmann was reading the letter, his pale face became paler and paler, his hands more trembling; his features plainly showed extreme agitation, whilst he was passing as it were from the depths of despair to unlooked-for happiness. When he had read the letter he looked at Fred, his eyes moistened with tears.

‘No; it is not an empty dream, thanks be to God for His mercy,’ said he. ‘A great lesson may be learned from your example, Fred, that religion and piety, instead of being, as some worldly persons falsely suppose, so many useless things in the way of success in business,—I may add, in life,—are in reality so many necessary things in order to make this success a real and happy one. Our blessed Lord and Saviour has said for our instruction: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. xvi. 26). Your trust in your Saviour, and your good conduct, Fred, have brought their reward even in this world, as they were sure, sooner or later, to do.’

Then, rising from his seat in one of the moments of great emotion, which even a calm, business-like man, such as Mr. Kartmann was, sometimes feels when some extraordinary event happens to him, the manufacturer took Fred’s hand and shook it warmly.

‘Thanks!’ said he. ‘I shall not utter many

protestations of my gratitude to you for this service, which will, I firmly believe, with the divine blessing, enable me to make arrangements to recover my losses and establish my now failing business upon a sure and firm footing and basis. I will only add, that I shall henceforth consider you as one of my sons, as you have acted towards me as a good son would act towards his father ; so the least that I can do is to act as a father towards you.'





CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

MR. KARTMANN'S business became one of the most prosperous concerns in Mühlhausen, conducted as it was with all the modern improvements in machinery, etc. His debts and liabilities were in time all paid and met, and an increase of business gradually took place. Fred did not relax his efforts now that great prosperity attended his labours. He continued in the same steadfast path of duty and well-doing, sustained and encouraged by his faith in his Saviour's merits, not in his own. By this, he escaped the ill effects of that which the Apostle Paul has mentioned in 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3: 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth

anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of Him.'

Thus, year after year, Fred kept on the even tenor of his way. Mr. Kartmann, who was now Fred's father-in-law (as Fred had married one of Mr. Kartmann's daughters), placed the utmost confidence in his talents, skill, and integrity.

One thing cast a cloud over his otherwise happy condition. After the flight of his brother, he had vainly sought to discover what had become of Francis. At the time of his marriage, an article in a newspaper unexpectedly furnished him with the first and last information that he ever obtained concerning the fate of his brother, whose separation from him had caused him so much sorrow and regret. It was stated in the newspaper that the diligence on its way from Frankfort to Paris had been attacked by a band of robbers; the passengers had courageously defended themselves, and several of the robbers were mortally wounded, among whom was mentioned Francis Kosmall. Fred shed many bitter

tears over the memory of this wretched young man, who, though he began his career in life under the same circumstances, and was blessed by the same dying mother as his younger brother, yet ended his days so miserably, after a career so different from that of Fred. The words of the Psalmist were literally fulfilled: 'Evil shall slay the wicked; and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate' (Ps. xxxiv. 21).





NOTES.

NOTE 1, *page* 31.

CLEPSYDRA, or water-clock, a Greek invention for the division of time, consisting of a hollow globe made of glass or some transparent substance, from which the water trickled out through a narrow orifice in quantities so regulated, that the sinking level of the element marked with sufficient exactitude the time that had elapsed since the vessel was filled.—*From the Gladiator.*

NOTE 2, *page* 36.

The appellation of the united Roman people was *Populus Romanus Quirites*, or *Populus Romanus Quiritium*, although, when no great formality was aimed at, the separate designations, *Populus Romanus* and *Quirites*, were used indifferently to comprehend the whole.—*Ramsay.*

NOTE 3, *page* 39.

‘There are a great many different kinds of porphyry. The porphyry of the ancients is a most elegant mass, of an ex-

tremely firm and compact structure, remarkably heavy, and of a fine strong purple, variegated more or less with pale red and white ; its purple is of all degrees, from the claret colour to that of the violet ; and its variegations are rarely disposed in veins, but spots, sometimes very small, and at others running into large blotches. It is less fine than many of the ordinary marbles ; but it excels them all in hardness, and is capable of a most elegant polish. It is still found in immense strata in Egypt.' Superb basins of porphyry have been dug up both from the ruins of ancient Rome and of Pompeii.—*Encyclopædia Britannica*.

NOTE 4, page 39.

'The room in which the Romans supped was called *Triclinium*, because three couches were spread around the table, on which the guests might recline. On each couch there were commonly three. They lay with the upper part of the body reclined on the left arm, the head a little raised, the back supported by cushions, and the limbs stretched out at full length, or a little bent ; the feet of the first behind the back of the second, and his feet behind the back of the third, with a pillow between each. The head of the second was opposite to the breast of the first, so that if he wanted to speak to him, especially if the thing was to be secret, he was obliged to lean upon his bosom : thus John xiii. 28. In conversation, those who spoke raised themselves almost upright, supported by cushions. When they ate they raised themselves on their elbow, and made use of the right hand, sometimes of both hands, for we do not read of them using either knives or forks.'—*Adams' Roman Antiquities*.

NOTE 5, *page 40.*

'The *Muræna Gymnothorax*, called *Morena* in Italian, and reported to be a kind of fish between the land and sea viper, is armed with a sort of spear on its head : this spear, if touched, is venomous, and particularly distinguishes the *muræna* from the lamprey. The ancient Greeks and Romans, too prone to sacrifice to gluttony, kept their fishes, of every description, alive in reservoirs till the moment they were wanted for the table ; and the *muræna*, highly prized by epicures, was kept in a reservoir of sea and fresh water mixed, because it is supposed to require this mixture ; and sometimes, as we are told, it was fed with human flesh (that of slaves), in order to augment its bulk and improve its flavour.'—*Travels in Europe.*

NOTE 6, *page 41.*

Psilothrum is an ointment to take away hair.—*Ainsworth's Dictionary.*

NOTE 7, *page 43.*

'Not the least characteristic feature of the state of society under the Empire was the troop of freedmen that everywhere accompanied the person and swelled the retinue of each powerful patrician. These manumitted slaves were usually bound by the ties of interest as much as gratitude to the former master, who had now become their patron. Dependent on him in many cases for their daily food, doled out to them in rations at his door, they were necessarily little emancipated from his authority by their lately acquired freedom. While the relation of patron and client was pro-

ductive of crying evils in the Imperial city, while the former threw the shield of his powerful protection over the crimes of the latter, and the client in return became the willing pander to his patron's vices, it was the freedman who, more than all others, rendered himself a willing tool to his patrician employer, who yielded unhesitatingly time, affections, probity, and honour itself, to the caprices of his lord.'—*The Gladiator*.

NOTE 8, page 45.

'Apicius was a noted glutton in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. It is recorded of him that he spent £2,500,000 sterling in providing the luxuries of his table, and finding his finances reduced to £250,000, he poisoned himself for fear of starving. There were two other epicures of the same name.'—*Maunder's Treasury of Biography*.



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